

# Algeria closes airspace to all Moroccan planes

*Presidency says the move comes ‘in view of the continued provocations and hostile practices on the Moroccan side’.*

Algeria broke off diplomatic ties with Morocco on August 24 [File: Farouk Batiche/AFP]

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Algeria’s presidency has announced the closure of the country’s airspace to all Moroccan planes, according to the presidency, in the latest dispute between the two neighbours at odds mainly over Western Sahara.

The move on Wednesday was announced after a meeting of the High Security Council chaired by President Abdelmadjid Tebboune.

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A statement said the immediate shutting down affected “all civilian and military aircraft as well as to those registered in Morocco”.

The decision came “in view of the continued provocations and hostile practices on the Moroccan side”, it added.

There was no immediate reaction by Morocco.

A source at Royal Air Maroc (RAM) told Reuters news agency the move would only affect 15 flights weekly linking Morocco with Tunisia, Turkey and Egypt.

The source, who asked to remain anonymous, described the impact on RAM as insignificant and said the relevant flights could reroute over the Mediterranean.

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Algeria [broke off](#) diplomatic ties with Morocco on August 24, accusing it of “hostile actions” after months of heightened tensions between the two North African countries.

The previous month, the Algerian foreign ministry had recalled its ambassador to Morocco and hinted at possible further measures.

The move was linked to comments from the Moroccan envoy to the United Nations, Omar Hilal, on Algeria's Kabylie region, the ministry said after the envoy drew the region into the decades-old dispute over Western Sahara, which is claimed by Morocco as well as the Algeria-backed Polisario Front.

Hilal had called at a meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement for "the right of self-determination for the people living in the Kabylie region" in reference to Algeria's Tamazight-speaking minority.

He had suggested Algeria should not deny that while backing self-determination for Western Sahara.

Morocco's normalisation of ties with Israel last year as a quid pro quo for US recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara also angered Algiers.

Land borders between Algeria and Morocco have been shut since the early 1990s over security, aggravating friction between Algiers and Rabat whose relations have been worsening due to the conflict.

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SOURCE: NEWS AGENCIES