



Travel and stay recommendations

IMPORTANT: Please read these recommendations carefully before travel and follow instructions



Quick practical information

- **Documents:**

To travel to Algeria your passport must have a validity of at least another 6 months at the time of travel. FiSahara processes a **collective visa**.

- **Madrid-Tindouf-Madrid:**

AIR ALGERIE charter flight, leaving from **Terminal 4 at Barajas Airport**. Passengers do not have individual tickets and no prior check-in is required. The airline will have a passenger list and issue boarding cards at the airport.

- **Communications:**

There is cell phone reception in the refugee camps. However, phone charges for foreign numbers are astronomical for calls, SMS and Internet access. We recommend **deactivating your roaming and connecting via WIFI** in camp hotspots (some families have routers).

- **Currency/money:**

The currency in the camps is Algerian dinars, although you can pay for almost everything in euros (except small items in local stores). Dollars are not widely accepted.

To cover costs for meals, water and other items during your stay with your Sahrawi family, you must give the woman head of household 15€ per person per day upon arrival.

- **Light/energy:**

Most camps now have some basic electricity. However, it is necessary to take a flashlight with extra batteries, as there are frequent blackouts and nights can be very dark. Homes have some outlets to charge phones and other devices. We recommend bringing a multiple outlet plug to charge several devices at once.

- **Health and security:**

We urge you to closely read and follow all instructions and recommendations in this document concerning the prevention and treatment of health problems, as well as the security protocols in place that must be followed at all times.

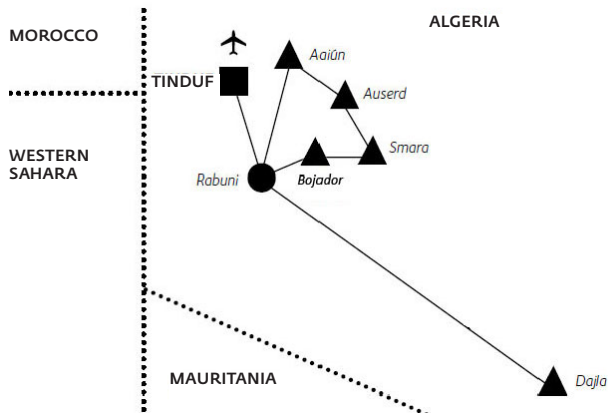
1) Where are the refugee camps and why do we celebrate FiSahara there?



The Sahrawi refugee camps are in Southwestern Algeria near the town of Tindouf, in the heart of the Sahara Desert. Around half of the indigenous population of Western Sahara, a North African territory located on the Atlantic Coast between Morocco and Mauritania, fled to this region when Morocco and Mauritania invaded their land in 1975 as the Spanish colonial authorities withdrew; the other half remains in Western Sahara under Moroccan occupation. (For more please see section on Basic Information on Conflict).

Sahrawis who built and settled in the refugee camps, and the subsequent generations born there, face tough living conditions in exile -- a harsh climate in an arid land, few opportunities, food, medical and basic infrastructural scarcity, geographic isolation and a total dependency on dwindling international humanitarian aid. The Covid-19 pandemic only aggravated these conditions. But most devastating is international invisibility, and the Sahrawi people use an abundance of creative cultural resistance to fight back.

In 2003 Sahrawi refugees joined hands with Spanish cultural activists and decided to create an international film festival in the camps to call attention to their plight and invited international filmmakers, artists, journalists, activists and the public to join them in trying to shatter the silence around the forgotten conflict in Western Sahara.



Thousands have so far responded to this call, and FiSahara today is one of the world's most unique solidarity film festivals and a member of the Human Rights Film Network. Film screenings open a window into the world and Sahrawis engage and share their stories with international visitors, who themselves witness first-hand the situation in the camps. Media coverage of the festival sheds light on the frozen conflict. Many new projects are born of these cross-cultural encounters: FiSahara's film workshops led to the creation of the Abidin Kaid Saleh Audiovisual School, which has trained the first generation of Sahrawi filmmakers who today co-organize the film festival and run Solar Cinema Western Sahara, a mobile film project that tours the camps throughout the year.

In addition to FiSahara, there are scores of arts and culture collectives, projects and festivals in the refugee camps.

Doctors, teachers, artists, journalists, community activists and many others who have visited FiSahara have gone on to collaborate with the Sahrawis through their own areas of specialty, spawning numerous other projects that are having their own extraordinary impact.

We hope that our visitors enjoy this unique experience and if you are interested we will be happy to connect you to local and international organizations working to improve the lives of Sahrawis and to raise international awareness about their plight.

You, too, can become a part of our movement!

2) Planning your trip



Weather conditions

The Sahrawi refugee camps are in the Hammada, a part of the Sahara Desert with a particularly harsh climate. Day and night-time temperatures can drastically fluctuate. During festival dates, days are usually sunny and hot (25-35 °C/77- 95°F), while nights can be quite cool (as low as 10 °C/50 °F or less). Occasionally there is a strong wind, known as the sirocco.



Packing

Each passenger is allowed to check a 20kg (40lb) bag and carry on about 10kg (20 lbs) in hand luggage. We urge travellers to carry by hand essential items, including medication, valuables, hygiene items and a change of clothes in case some checked luggage does not make it on the plane. We recommend checking a large, comfortable backpack or bag with a distinctive marker so that you can easily identify it. Streets in the camps are mostly sandy, so large suitcases with wheels are not the best option.

Packing adequate clothing and items that protect from the cold, the heat, the sun and the sand are very important.



Clothing

For the daytime we recommend bringing cool, comfortable clothing: T-shirts, light trousers, a hat and a light scarf for protection from the sand. Sahrawi Elzams or turbans, composed of a long piece of fabric and worn by most local men, are a good option and available in the camps. For the evenings we recommend sweaters (such as fleece) and a warm jacket/windbreaker. T-shirts and light pants are comfortable choices to sleep in. Sahrawis are extremely tolerant of cultural differences but we advise not to wear very short pants and skirts or other revealing clothing. It is advisable to bring quality sunglasses and a hat for protection from the sun.

The temperature usually plummets as soon as the sun sets, so visitors should carry a warm jacket with them in the afternoons for screenings and other night activities.



Footwear

The ground in the camps is made up of sand and stones, so for the outdoors we recommend comfortable, closed-toed shoes and socks. At home in the haimas people walk barefoot so a pair of flip-flops or sandals is a good option.



Sleeping

We will sleep on cushions and small foam mattresses on the floor, which is usually lined with rugs. On very warm nights some families and guests prefer to sleep outside under the stars. Sahrawi families provide thick blankets but we also recommend bringing a light sleeping bag and a small pillow. Many guests leave these items behind for the family.



Medication and personal hygiene

Medicines are not readily available in the camps, so if you need medication you should bring it with you and pack it in your carry-on luggage. Some guests suffer from travelers' diarrhea or an upset stomach due to adaptation to local food, so prevention and treatment are important (please see below for prevention recommendations).

MEDICAL KIT: Medication to treat diarrhea and nausea, a rehydration kit, ibuprofen and/or paracetamol, a thermometer, gauzes and band-aids, a disinfectant for wounds, eye drops for irritation, high-protection sunscreen, lip protection and aloe vera or a soothing after-sun cream.

PERSONAL HYGIENE: A few rolls of toilet paper, tissues, wet wipes, female hygiene products, a small super-absorbent towel, hand disinfectant, toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant and a small amount of soap and shampoo. Please bring some plastic bags to discard trash and used toilet paper.



Other items

A flashlight, daypack, writing items, external phone charger, food, snacks and water for travel days.



Gifts

Please do not forget to leave a little room in your bag for something special for your family. Recommended items are school supplies (blank notebooks, pencils, pens, colouring items), light children's clothing and shoes (shorts, pants, T-shirts, dresses, sandals, sweatshirts), toys or games, long-sleeved adult T-shirts, cookies, sewing kits, hydrating creams (non medicated) for very dry skin and personal hygiene items such as toothbrushes.

We advise against giving non over-the-counter medication to families, although leaving your first-aid kit for them is advisable. If you bring medication to donate, please check its expiration date and hand it to the local hospital or the Red Crescent through FiSahara representatives.



Money

The local currency is the Algerian Dinar.

Euros are accepted in the camps but foreign coins are not accepted and change is returned in dinars, so large bills are not advised. Your Sahrawi family can help you to change some money in the market place.

3) Madrid-Tinduf-Sahrawi Camps: The trip to the camp



At the Madrid airport

We will be flying from Madrid to Tindouf (Algeria) on an AIR ALGERIE charter flight. Festival travelers will meet in Terminal 4 at Barajas International Airport (Madrid) – exact time to be confirmed pending final schedule. Most years, our check-in counter is 970. Please be advised that T-4 is in a separate location, several kilometers away from the rest of the airport terminals.

We recommend that travellers coming from third countries arrive in Madrid on the day prior to travel to the camps. We also advise on planning an overnight stay in Madrid on the evening of our return to ensure that you connect with your next flight or other transport. **We will not be able to wait for any passengers arriving late**, so please be at the airport on time.

You will not need a plane ticket but will need your valid passport, which must have six months of validity left at travel time. We will have your name and passport information on our collective visa and travel list. All travelers must have previously registered via FiSahara's website, as we process a collective visa in the weeks before travel.

At the counter you will check your bag and receive additional festival information, including your festival catalog. Please keep your luggage receipt with you until your retrieve your items in Tindouf.

Check-in is usually equal parts festive and hectic, as we all travel together - audience, filmmakers, activists, projectionists, musicians, workshop participants, technicians and the festival crew, plus all equipment. The FiSahara team will be very busy but please approach us for help if you have any needs or doubts. Keep an eye on flight information on airport screens, as the flight schedule and gate number are subject to changes.

AIRALGERIE serves a modest meal, but we recommend that you bring snacks to get you through this very long day -- sandwiches, nuts, cereal bars, chips, cookies, fruit and a water bottle. You may want to bring additional snacks for energy during the festival dates. We also recommend your bring tissues or wet wipes in your carry-on in case you need to use the bathroom at the Tindouf airport.

Arrival in Tindouf

Tindouf is not a tourist destination. We land in an airport in Southwestern Algeria that has many restrictions and visitors are not allowed to photograph or videotape installations. Passport control is usually slow and requires patience. Passengers will identify and pick up their bags, which will then be loaded onto the vehicles for the ground trip. Please beware that items such as walkie-talkies might not be allowed past customs, and be sure to check with FiSahara's team if you are planning to bring electronic items other than cameras to avoid problems with the Algerian authorities.

The land trip to the camps

The protocol department of the Polisario Front will be waiting for us at the airport to take us to the refugee camps. We will ride on four-by-fours, buses and other vehicles in a secure convoy, and our luggage and equipment will travel on trucks.

The trip through the desert, mostly on a paved road, takes a while. Once we arrive at the camp we ask visitors again to be patient during the family distribution process. The FiSahara team will assign you a woman head of household who will take you home to her family. Most visitors will be organized in groups of around five people. If you wish to stay with a particular group of people, please notify the FiSahara team as soon as possible, before our travel date.

You will probably arrive in your haima (Sahrawi home) late at night. Your host family will make sure that all your personal needs are tended to and may offer you a full meal, even if it is very late at night. Make sure you sleep with a flashlight close by in case you need to use the outhouse, as nights can be dark.

4) Our stay in the camps



When visitors are asked what they most liked about FiSahara, they often speak about their experience being welcomed into a Sahrawi family. Upon arrival in the camps, guests are assigned a local family that for the next week will open up their home, and you will enjoy festival programming and many other experiences with them. Often, this results in strong bonds and a relationship that continues well beyond the festival.

Your family will provide all meals and drinks during your stay. To cover costs for food, water and other items during your stay with your Sahrawi family, you must give the woman head of household **15€ per person per day** upon arrival.

Make sure that you note down your family's name, telephone number and exact location and carry that piece of paper with you at all times in case you cannot find your way home.

Sahrawi hospitality is renowned, and we recommend that you enjoy it as much as possible around the traditional three cups of tea. Your family will be attentive to your needs; they will accompany you to the festival and show you around. Often families assign a young man to this task. You may be with a family that does not speak your language, but Sahrawis find ways to communicate (most have at least one Spanish-speaking member).

Please make sure you let your family know if you plan to be absent for one of the main meals so that they do not wait for you. Families provide bottled water but make sure that you stock up during the day to protect yourself from overheating and dehydration.



Sahrawi camps and homes

The Sahrawi refugee community is highly organised. While highly dependent on international humanitarian aid to feed and sustain the population, the camps are completely self-run through the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), Western Sahara's government-in-exile, which is structured much like a small nation. The SADR government has a president, a prime minister, a parliament, a series of ministries and a wide network of governors, mayors and community leaders. Each camp is known as a Wilaya (region) and borrows the name of a Western Sahara region/city under Moroccan occupation; each wilaya has towns (dairas) and within each, neighborhoods. In each camp there are scores of schools, community libraries, cultural associations, youth collectives and organizations focusing on a wide range of issues and activities.

Sahrawi families live in small compounds usually composed of a large nomad tent (haima), where family life takes place, and small adobe structures with sleeping and living areas, and a kitchen. Guests usually sleep in a room within these adobe houses, in groups of five.

There is no running water or sanitation in the camps. Homes have a separate outhouse with a basic latrine (toilet paper is not provided) and an area in which to take a modest bucket bath.

Meals

For breakfast your family will offer you coffee or tea, milk, bottled juice, bread, butter and jam. Local dishes include chicken, lamb or camel stew and vegetables, with couscous, pasta or rice. Families survive mostly on staples like lentils, fried eggs with potatoes, omelettes and pasta and will also serve them to guests.

Please make sure you inform your family if you have any food allergies or dietary restrictions --it is OK to tell them that you don't eat certain items and they will make sure not to serve them to you. Camp supplies are limited and any special items such as gluten-free food are not easy to come by, so if you need gluten-free snacks please bring them with you. Some families serve salads at meals; however, we recommend that you avoid eating uncooked vegetables and unpeeled fruit. Beware of camel milk, a delicacy for Sahrawis that is often unpasteurized and can make visitors sick.

Most families eat separately from their guests but will enjoy drinking tea with them.

Communication

The local language is Hassanniya, which is similar to Arabic. Many Sahrawis speak Spanish because of the Western Sahara's historic relation to Spain, as the former colonial power. The youngest generations learn Spanish in school and through summer vacation programs, when they travel to stay with Spanish families. Some Sahrawis have studied secondary school and university in Cuba and are known as "Cubarauiis" -- they speak with a Cuban accent. There are also some Sahrawi refugees who speak English or French, although it is less common. Sahrawis from the occupied Western Sahara can speak French.

Local culture and customs

Sahrawi culture includes a mix of Berber, Touareg and Bedouin cultures. There are also black Sahrawis, the majority descendants of slaves. Most people are Muslim. Sahrawis' rich culture is threatened by occupation in the Western Sahara and by the isolation faced by refugees in the camps, and they are very keen to share it with visitors. During the festival you will have the opportunity to enjoy many expressions of Sahrawi culture including the traditional fair known as Le Frig, concerts and Sahrawi cinematography.

Women are at the center of Sahrawi family life. Women and children built the camps while the men went to war, and women have a key role in Sahrawi society and within the family. Women bear most responsibilities in raising the family and managing the family economy. They are organized into cooperatives and represented by organizations such as the National Union of Sahrawi Women. Generally speaking, Sahrawis are very open and accustomed to international visitors. However, we urge travelers to avoid alcohol and drug use and carefully observe your family's customs.

Health

The nearest fully equipped hospital, in Tindouf, is about one or two hours from the camps (by car). If you are suffering from a serious illness, this is probably not the best trip for you. Each wilaya (camp) has a small hospital that often lacks basic medication. For the duration of the festival, we will have a health post that can provide basic care and an ambulance for emergencies. We strongly advise visitors to have medical and travel insurance.

Many festival visitors remain healthy throughout their stay, but some can develop stomach problems and/or traveler's diarrhea. It is also important to keep hydrated and protected from the sun, the cold and the sand. Some health tips:

- **Always drink bottled water and keep a bottle permanently at hand**
- **Avoid raw vegetables and unpeeled fruit.**
- **Do not eat food from vendors if it has not been freshly prepared or seems like it has been sitting for a while.**
- **Always use hand disinfectant after using the toilet and before meals.**
- **Avoid unpasteurized items such as camel milk.**
- **Avoid walking outside in the central part of the day.**
- **Get vaccinated for hepatitis and typhoid.**
- **Bring adequate clothing.**

Special recommendations

Emergency contact information

FiSahara will give you contact telephone numbers, some Algerian and some Spanish, that you need to keep with you at all hours in case of emergency.



Electronic devices and cell phones

Please use WIFI and remain available via WhatsApp as much as possible so that you can be contacted by the organisation in case of need. Most of Sahrawi homes have some electricity, so it is possible to charge your electronic devices, although it is best to use a phone with a long-life battery and/or have an extra charger. There may be sudden power surges. We recommend bringing surge protectors and offering them to the family at your departure. If you have an unlocked phone you can buy a local Algerian phone card in the camps. There is decent reception in the camps but calls in and out of international phones are very expensive.

Medical emergencies

If you suffer from a health problem during the festival please contact FiSahara organizers immediately. We will have a special medical service available during the festival.

Money

We recommend bringing some money for incidentals. The family will provide you with bottled water but you will probably need to purchase some during the day when you are not home. Sahrawi artisans, food vendors and other merchants will have stands around FiSahara, so you will be able to buy souvenirs and snacks. They accept euros, or your family can help you changing some money into Algerian dinars.

Internet access

There is limited Internet access in the camps, but an increasing number of families have routers and wifi in their homes. There are some hotspots in the camp. During the festival FiSahara obtains Internet access only for media covering the event. International smart phones do work, although roaming fees are very high.

5) Festival locations and activities



FiSahara will provide visitors with a program and will keep you informed about residential and festival locations including the medical post and the information center.

FiSahara visitors will be staying close to the festival grounds. Access to all festival activities is free. This includes festival opening and closing ceremonies, film screenings, roundtables (workshops will have restricted access and are mostly designed for Sahrawis), the two-day Sahrawi traditional cultural fair (known as LeFrig), the parade, concerts, children's activities and sporting events, such the international soccer match. We encourage you to enjoy these activities with your Sahrawi family.

FiSahara will have an information post for visitors close to FiSahara production offices where you can get the latest information on programming and visits and make inquiries. If local logistics permit we are planning an orientation session on the first day for all visitors. Programming may suffer last minute changes due to logistics, so it is very advisable to check frequently with the information post for the latest news.



Most activities are within walking distance of the festival grounds, but some require transportation. Please read our program carefully and make sure you check daily with our information post regarding the times, locations and meeting spots for these trips.

Evening screenings, especially those taking place under an open sky, can get chilly. Please make sure you bring a warm jacket. Once programming is over, audience members must return to their homes, as circulating in the camp late at night is not permitted.

Around the festival grounds you will see thematic tents showcasing local NGO's, as well as local artisans, food and drinks vendors and cooperatives selling their products. By visiting them you can learn more about local organizations and support the local economy.

Our FiSahara team will do everything possible to tend to our audience's needs. However, please keep in mind that the festival is organized under very precarious conditions and we ask visitors to be understanding about last-minute changes to programming, electrical blackouts and other logistical problems.

6) Sahrawi camps-Tindouf-Madrid: The trip back



One of the most moving moments of the festival is when, on the last day, visitors say goodbye to their Sahrawi families. For one week, their haima has been our home, and we have become family to them. Often, FiSahara visitors are surprised a few days after arriving back home with a phone call from their new Sahrawi relatives inquiring about the trip back. Many FiSahara visitors have returned to the camps to visit their Sahrawi families.

FiSahara organizers will inform visitors about the time and place of gathering for the land trip back to Tindouf. Host families will take their guests to the waiting buses and cars. Please make

sure you are up early on that day and that your bags are packed and ready.

Depending on the logistics of this travel day, FiSahara sometimes includes a visit to the festival's year-round film school, the Abidin Kaid Saleh Audiovisual school, located in the Bojador camp near Tindouf. Visitors will have the opportunity to tour the facilities and speak with some students, who will also have participated in FiSahara activities and screened their films.

Once at the airport, we once again ask visitors for patience, as checking bags and festival equipment, and clearing security and passport control, can be a

long process. Please avoid taking sand, fossils and "desert roses" with you, as Algerian authorities will confiscate these items. There is a basic food and drinks stand at the airport before passport control.

We will arrive back in Madrid late at night on Sunday. The FiSahara team will be at your disposal to help you should you encounter an incident. However, if there is a loss of luggage, passengers will need to address AIR ALGERIE directly (our team will provide contact information if you cannot find an airline representative).

7) Security in the camps



We ask festival visitors to keep safety in mind during this trip. There is an evening curfew in the Sahrawi refugee camps, which may be modified during FiSahara to accommodate night-time activities.

Please pay attention to, and follow, all security instructions given by FiSahara and your host family.

The Sahrawi refugee camps are not a tourist destination. Conditions on the ground are precarious, and security is an ongoing issue. The political instability in Northern Mali and the Sahel has destabilized the region.

The FiSahara team, in collaboration with Sahrawi and Algerian authorities and the United Nations, has adopted a security protocol that must be followed at all times by festival visitors.

Do not stray from festival grounds or your community, never walk alone and do not walk around the camp late at night once programming is over. Stay in touch with your host family and make sure they know about your plans. You must never board vehicles unless they are provided directly by FiSahara. If needed, the team will provide additional security instructions during the festival.

FiSahara also urges visitors to respect local customs and traditions. Sahrawis are Muslim. In general, they are very open and accustomed to international visitors, but visitors should avoid consuming alcohol and/or drugs. Short items (pants and skirts) and low-cut tops may make some Sahrawis feel uncomfortable.

Basic recommendations

• FLIGHT INFO:

You will not be traveling with a plane ticket, so please print out your flight information as soon as we send it and have it ready.

• TRAVEL RECOMMENDATIONS:

Please read this document carefully and carry it with you.

• INSURANCE:

Basic insurance is not included in the travel price, we strongly advise visitors to have comprehensive, up-to-date health and travel insurance.

• PASSPORT:

You must bring a valid passport for the flights to and from Tindouf. Please make sure that your passport has an additional six months of validity after our return from Tindouf and that you provide festival organizers with the correct information.

• PHONES:

Try to avoid smartphones needing frequent charging, as electrical outlets are scarce. Please make sure you give festival organizers your contact telephone number if you will be using a phone in the camps.

• MONEY:

We recommend you bring some money for incidentals such as bottled water, snacks and souvenirs. Please keep it with you. Families can assist in changing Euros to dinars.

• BELONGINGS:

You can leave your luggage safely in your Sahrawi home. Families are good at protecting guests' belongings, but try to keep essentials such as passport on you. We recommend a small bag or travel pouch.

• PROFILAXIS:

Prevention is the best medicine. We recommend the hepatitis and typhoid vaccines, although they are not required. Those with medical needs should bring their own medication. Not all families have adequate

refrigeration. Bring a basic medical kit. Keep hydrated and follow our basic hygiene rules to protect against illness, as well as sun, wind, heat, sand and cold exposure.

• PREVENTION:

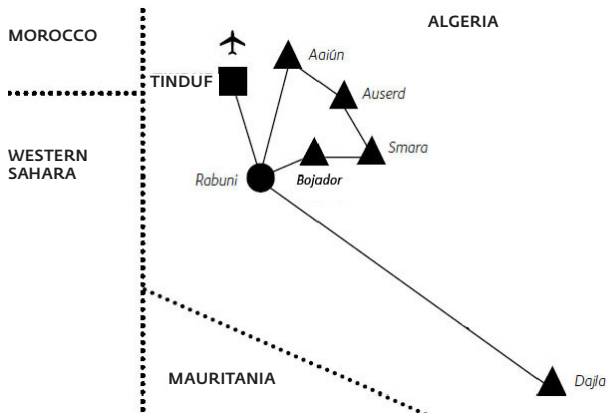
Avoid risks and accidents. Please wear safety belt during car rides whenever possible. Follow all of our safety and security recommendations.

In your haima, be careful with electrical cables and lit cigarettes that could spark a fire.

• PATIENCE:

Patience is your best ally during some moments of FiSahara, especially on travel days. Long waits can be an excellent opportunity to meet and get to know your travel companions and learn more about the plight of the Sahrawi people.

9) Basic information on the conflict



The Western Sahara's more than four-decade conflict is also one of the world's most invisible crises. The territory lies between Morocco, Mauritania and Algeria and its long coastline stretches along the Atlantic Ocean.

Morocco and Mauritania occupied the Western Sahara in 1975 when Spain, the colonial power, reached an agreement allowing the invasion to go forward; Morocco also had the green light and the military support of the US and French governments. Thousands of Sahrawis, including many women and children, fled from the repression that followed and crossed into Algeria, where they were allowed to settle near the town of Tindouf.

With Algeria's support, the anti-colonial movement that had fought to oust Spain, known as the Polisario Front, went to war against Morocco and Mauritania. In 1979 Mauritania withdrew. The war ended in 1991 with a UN-sponsored cease-fire agreement that included the promise of a referendum on self-determination and the return of the refugee population.

With aid from the US and Israel, Morocco built a 2,720 km separation wall, a militarized trench sewn with millions of mines separating the occupied Western Sahara and a portion of the territory controlled by the Polisario - separating Sahrawi family members in the camps from those living under occupation.

Although several UN resolutions have called for the celebration of a referendum, Rabat has persistently refused to allow the vote to take place. At stake are powerful economic and strategic interests that include the territory's rich natural resources: phosphates, rich fishing waters and the promise of offshore oil.

In November of 2020, after 29 years of cease-fire, Morocco launched a military operation in a buffer zone of Western Sahara near the Mauritanian border to violently break up a peaceful sit-in by Sahrawi civilians who had interrupted traffic to protest an illegally-built road used by Morocco to transport plundered goods from Western Sahara. The cease-fire was shattered, and the armed conflict between Polisario and Morocco resumed. Weeks later, on December 10th, former US President Donald Trump illegally recognized Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara -- the only country in the world to do so -- in exchange for diplomatic normalization between Israel and Morocco as a part of the Abraham Accords.

Both the US and France, close political allies of Rabat, have either been reluctant or have directly blocked attempts at the UN Security Council to force Morocco to hold a referendum. This political stalemate means that Sahrawi refugees in the camps, nearing the end of a fourth decade of exile, have no immediate hope of returning to their homeland. Refugees are at particular risk for arrest if they attempt to return to the occupied Western Sahara, while those from the occupied territory who visit the camps are sometimes arrested upon return.

Meanwhile, the Moroccan military occupation of the Western Sahara has become increasingly repressive with the jailing, disappearance and torture of Sahrawi human rights defenders, journalists and pro-independence activists. Reporters without Borders labeled Western Sahara a “news black hole”; international journalists are generally barred from entering and the movements of those who manage to get in are closely monitored and their reporting activities restricted. Most international human rights monitors are barred from the territory, and the UN’s peacekeeping mission to Western Sahara, known as MINURSO, is the only modern UN peacekeeping mission in the world that does not have a human rights mandate.

Sahrawi video activists film demonstrations and repression from rooftops and homes, providing some of the only footage of human rights violations available to the international community.

Recommended readings and information

Western Sahara War, Nationalism, and Conflict Irresolution, Second Edition, by Jacob Mundy and Stephen Zunes: <https://press.syr.edu/supressbooks/4624/western-sahara/>

Endgame in Western Sahara (Tony Shelley): <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/endgame-in-the-western-sahara-9781848136588/>

The Oasis of Memory: Historical Memory and Human Rights Violations in Western Sahara, by Carlos Martin Beristain and Eloísa Gonzalez Hidalgo: https://publicaciones.hegoa.ehu.es/uploads/pdfs/368/Summary_Oasis.pdf?1525689961

Up-to-date articles on the conflict: <http://stephenzunes.org/category/topic/western-sahara/>

Online documentary: **Four Days in Occupied Western Sahara: Africa's Last Colony**, by Democracy Now! https://www.democracynow.org/2018/8/31/four_days_in_occupied_western_sahara

Democracy Now!'s ongoing coverage on Western Sahara: https://www.democracynow.org/topics/western_sahara

Online documentary **Life is Waiting: Referendum and Resistance in Western Sahara** by Iara Lee: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9QzRzm4uFxU>

Online documentary **Three Stolen Cameras**, by Equipe Media and Råfilm: <http://www.3stolencameras.com/the-film/>

Reporters without Borders 2019 report on Western Sahara: https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/rapport_sahara_-_final_pdf2.pdf