

Moroccan Wall of Shame | Many Sahrawis live on both sides of the wall

Morocco's 1,690 miles (2,720 kilometer) long security barrier in occupied Western Sahara

The Moroccan Wall is a 1,690 miles long system of defensive walls, built in six stages, longer than the Great Wall of China and than the Israeli West Bank barrier. It is made of earth, rock and sand, reinforced with soldiers, anti-personnel and anti-tank mines, trenches and radar detectors. Also known as berm; the sand wall, with bunkers and fences is three metres high with regularly spaced garrisons, manned by Moroccan troops, barbed wire and several million landmines. The wall holds the biggest concentration of landmines in Western Sahara.

The wall cuts diagonally through Western Sahara, extending from the north-east corner down to the south-west, near the Mauritanian border, granting Morocco the two-thirds of the territory which contain most of the fertile land, the coast with its excellent fishing industry, huge phosphate deposits, and recently discovered oil reserves.

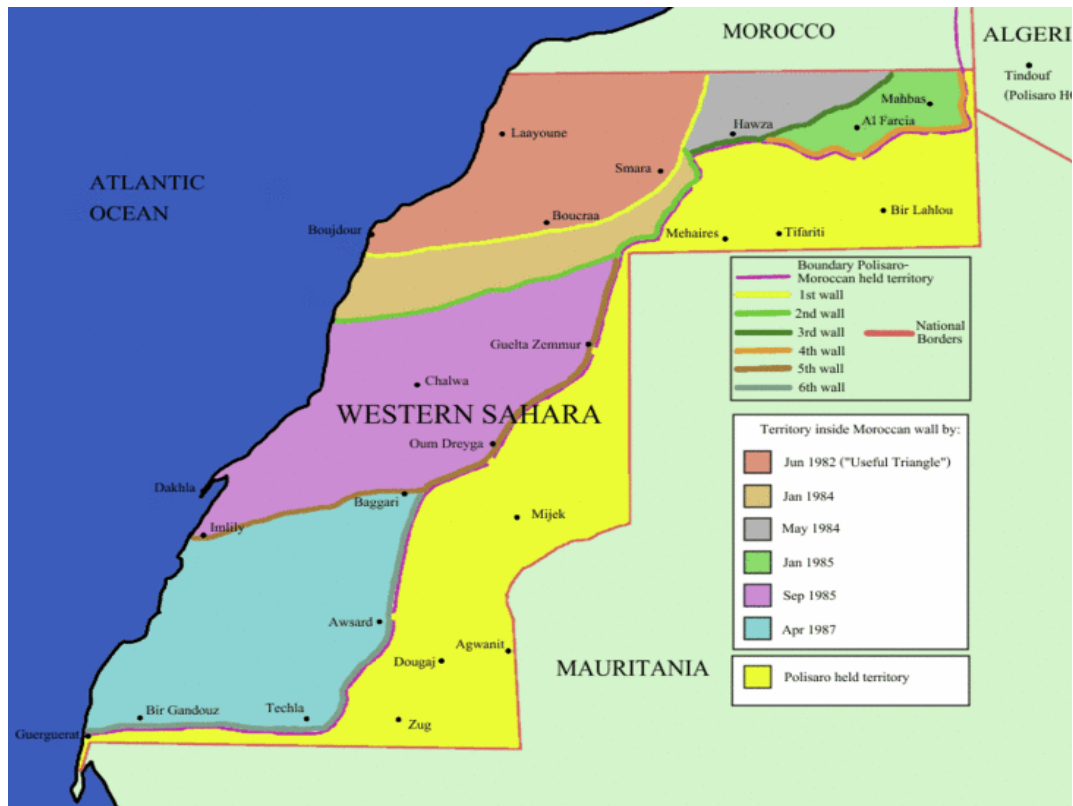
Between 1980 and 1987, following advice given to Hassan II by Ariel Sharon, and obtaining the financing from Saudi Arabia, Morocco built this long defensive barrier to prevent the Polisario Front from continuing its attacks on occupation forces. Effectively, Polisario Front controls all areas to the east of the barrier.

The Moroccans refer to this barrier as "the berm", and this is the term employed in a number of UN Security Council and General Assembly documents, reports, and press releases, which occasionally expand the term to "the defensive berm". However, the wall is dubbed by the Sahrawis "The Wall of Shame".

Saharawi families - living on both sides of the wall - have been separated by this barrier for almost three decades. Most of the locals fled the Moroccan invasion of the territory in 1975 to find refuge in desert camps, near Tindouf, Algeria. During the same period some 200,000 Moroccans settled in the occupied territory.

The wall was built in six stages, and the area behind the wall was expanded from a small area near Morocco in the north, to most of the western and central part of the country gradually. The walls built were:

- 1st wall (Aug 1980-Jun 1982) surrounding the "useful triangle" of El-Aaiun, Smara and the phosphate mines at Bu Craa.
- 2nd wall (Dec 1983-Jan 1984)
- 3rd wall (Apr 1984-May 1984)
- 4th wall (Dec 1984-Jan 1985)
- 5th wall (May-Sep 1985)
- 6th wall (Feb-Apr 1987)



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International March Protest against the "Wall of Shame" (2004)



