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WRITTEN BY		August 25, 2022	

REVISION HISTORY

NUMBER	DATE	DESCRIPTION	NAME

Contents

1	259	1
1.1	259.guide	1
1.2	259.guide/Western Sahara	1
1.3	259.guide/Geography (Western Sahara)	2
1.4	259.guide/People (Western Sahara)	3
1.5	259.guide/Government (Western Sahara)	4
1.6	259.guide/Economy (Western Sahara)	4
1.7	259.guide/Communications (Western Sahara)	5
1.8	259.guide/Defense Forces (Western Sahara)	6

Chapter 1

259

1.1 259.guide

Texified version of data for Western Sahara.

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Western Sahara

1.2 259.guide/Western Sahara

Western Sahara

Geography (Western Sahara)

People (Western Sahara)

Government (Western Sahara)

Economy (Western Sahara)

Communications (Western Sahara)

Defense Forces (Western Sahara)

1.3 259.guide/Geography (Western Sahara)

Geography (Western Sahara)

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Location:

Northern Africa, along the Atlantic Ocean, between Morocco and Mauritania

Map references:

Africa, Standard Time Zones of the World

Area:

total area:

266,000 km²

land area:

266,000 km²

comparative area:

slightly smaller than Colorado

Land boundaries:

total 2,046 km, Algeria 42 km, Mauritania 1,561 km, Morocco 443 km

Coastline:

1,110 km

Maritime claims:

contingent upon resolution of sovereignty issue

International disputes:

claimed and administered by Morocco, but sovereignty is unresolved and the UN is attempting to hold a referendum on the issue; the UN-administered cease-fire has been currently in effect since September 1991

Climate:

hot, dry desert; rain is rare; cold offshore air currents produce fog and heavy dew

Terrain:

mostly low, flat desert with large areas of rocky or sandy surfaces rising to small mountains in south and northeast

Natural resources:

phosphates, iron ore

Land use:

arable land:

0%

permanent crops:

0%

meadows and pastures:

19%

forest and woodland:

0%

other:

81%

Irrigated land:

NA km²

Environment:

hot, dry, dust/sand-laden sirocco wind can occur during winter and spring; widespread harmattan haze exists 60% of time, often severely restricting

visibility; sparse water and arable land

1.4 259.guide/People (Western Sahara)

People (Western Sahara)

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Population:

206,629 (July 1993 est.)

Population growth rate:

2.52% (1993 est.)

Birth rate:

47.54 births/1,000 population (1993 est.)

Death rate:

19.57 deaths/1,000 population (1993 est.)

Net migration rate:

-2.79 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1993 est.)

Infant mortality rate:

155.5 deaths/1,000 live births (1993 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population:

44.88 years

male:

43.98 years

female:

46.06 years (1993 est.)

Total fertility rate:

7.01 children born/woman (1993 est.)

Nationality: noun:

Sahrawi(s), Sahraoui(s)

adjective:

Sahrawian, Sahraouian

Ethnic divisions:

Arab, Berber

Religions:

Muslim

Languages:

Hassaniya Arabic, Moroccan Arabic

Literacy:

total population:

NA%

male:

NA%

female:

NA%

Labor force:

12,000

by occupation:

animal husbandry and subsistence farming 50%

1.5 259.guide/Government (Western Sahara)

Government (Western Sahara)

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Names:

conventional long form:

none

conventional short form:

Western Sahara

Digraph:

WI

Type:

legal status of territory and question of sovereignty unresolved; territory contested by Morocco and Polisario Front (Popular Front for the Liberation of the Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro), which in February 1976 formally proclaimed a government in exile of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR); territory partitioned between Morocco and Mauritania in April 1976, with Morocco acquiring northern two-thirds; Mauritania, under pressure from Polisario guerrillas, abandoned all claims to its portion in August 1979; Morocco moved to occupy that sector shortly thereafter and has since asserted administrative control; the Polisario's government in exile was seated as an OAU member in 1984; guerrilla activities continued sporadically, until a UN-monitored cease-fire was implemented 6 September 1991

Capital:

none

Administrative divisions:

none (under de facto control of Morocco)

Leaders:

none

Member of:

none

Diplomatic representation in US:

none

US diplomatic representation:

none

1.6 259.guide/Economy (Western Sahara)

Economy (Western Sahara)

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Overview:

Western Sahara, a territory poor in natural resources and having little rainfall, has a per capita GDP of roughly \$300. Pastoral nomadism, fishing, and phosphate mining are the principal sources of income for the population ↔

Most of the food for the urban population must be imported. All trade and other economic activities are controlled by the Moroccan Government.

National product:

GDP - exchange rate conversion - \$60 million (1991 est.)
National product real growth rate:
NA%
National product per capita:
\$300 (1991 est.)
Inflation rate (consumer prices):
NA%
Unemployment rate:
NA%
Budget:
revenues \$NA; expenditures \$NA, including capital expenditures of \$NA
Exports:
\$8 million (f.o.b., 1982 est.)
commodities:
phosphates 62%
partners:
Morocco claims and administers Western Sahara, so trade partners are included in overall Moroccan accounts
Imports:
\$30 million (c.i.f., 1982 est.)
commodities:
fuel for fishing fleet, foodstuffs
partners:
Morocco claims and administers Western Sahara, so trade partners are included in overall Moroccan accounts
External debt:
\$NA
Industrial production:
growth rate NA%
Electricity:
60,000 kW capacity; 79 million kWh produced, 425 kWh per capita (1989)
Industries:
phosphate mining, fishing, handicrafts
Agriculture:
limited largely to subsistence agriculture; some barley is grown in nondrought years; fruit and vegetables are grown in the few oases; food imports are essential; camels, sheep, and goats are kept by the nomadic natives; cash economy exists largely for the garrison forces
Economic aid:
NA
Currency:
1 Moroccan dirham (DH) = 100 centimes
Exchange rates:
Moroccan dirhams (DH) per US\$1 - 9.034 (January 1993), 8.538 (1992), 8.707 (1991), 8.242 (1990), 8.488 (1989), 8.209 (1988)
Fiscal year:
NA

1.7 259.guide/Communications (Western Sahara)

Communications (Western Sahara)

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Highways:

6,200 km total; 1,450 km surfaced, 4,750 km improved and unimproved earth roads and tracks

Ports:

El Aaiun, Ad Dakhla

Airports:

total:

14

usable:

14

with permanent-surface runways:

3

with runways over 3,659 m:

0

with runways 2,440-3,659 m:

3

with runways 1,220-2,439 m:

5

Telecommunications:

sparse and limited system; tied into Morocco's system by microwave radio relay, troposcatter, and 2 Atlantic Ocean INTELSAT earth stations linked to Rabat, Morocco; 2,000 telephones; broadcast stations - 2 AM, no FM, 2 TV

1.8 259.guide/Defense Forces (Western Sahara)

Defense Forces (Western Sahara)

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Branches:

NA

Manpower availability:

NA

Defense expenditures:

exchange rate conversion - \$NA, NA% of GDP