

Congressional Support for US Aid in the Western Sahara

The US Congress has for years worked to bolster Morocco's efforts to improve social and economic conditions in the Western Sahara, through the allocation of specific program funds in annual Appropriations Bills.

- On January 17, 2014, President Obama signed into law the [FY2014 Appropriations Bill](#), which explicitly directed that existing development assistance to Morocco "[should also be available for assistance for the territory of the Western Sahara.](#)"
- President Obama also signed into law Appropriations Bills for [FY2015](#) and [FY2016](#), which reinforced the mandate to extend development assistance to Morocco, stating that funds "shall be made available for assistance for the Western Sahara."
- Both past and current laws also reflect broad Congressional support for resolving this issue based on a formula of autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty. This compromise political framework has been repeatedly endorsed by the Clinton, Bush, and Obama Administrations and backed by strong bipartisan majorities in the US Senate and House of Representatives.
- During House Appropriations Committee [deliberation on this legislation](#), Congressman Jim Moran has stated that the language "supports our current policy," and Congresswoman Kay Granger said that "Morocco has been an important friend of the United States," and a critical ally in the war on terror. Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart has reminded the Foreign Affairs Committee that 21 of its members have signed letters supporting Morocco and the appropriations bill language, which "will strengthen civil society and democratic institutions..."
- [The use of development assistance in the Western Sahara](#) makes good on President Obama's and King Mohammed VI's November 2013 commitment to improve the lives of those living there.

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