

## Pelagic trawlers in Western Sahara waters : an organized plunder ?

The Western Sahara (Arabic: الصحراء الغربية Aṣ-Ṣaḥrā' al-Gharbīyah, Spanish & French: Sahara Occidental) is a disputed territory in North Africa, bordered by Morocco to the north, Algeria to the northeast, Mauritania to the east and south, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. Its surface area amounts to 266,000 square kilometres. It is one of the most sparsely populated territories in the world, mainly consisting of desert flatlands.

Since a United Nations-sponsored ceasefire agreement in 1991, most of the territory (including the entire Atlantic coast line) has been controlled by Morocco, strongly backed by France, and the remainder by the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) (exiled government in Tindouf, Algeria), strongly backed by Algeria.

Despite the UN report regarding the exploration of oil off the coast of Western Sahara, the European Union wants to exploit fishing resources in waters outside Western Sahara and has signed a fishing treaty with Morocco.

In a confidential legal opinion (published in 23 February 2010), the European Parliament's Legal Service opined that **fishing by European vessels under a current EU - Morocco fishing agreement covering the Western Sahara's waters is in violation of international law.**

Through AIS internet-services, we can easily see that MANY large pelagic trawlers of various nationalities rush right now in Western Sahara coastal waters, especially in the vicinity of **Dajla (Al Dakhla)**, a city which has harbour facilities for such large vessels.

For example, I could identify and follow **26 (twenty-six) fishing vessels in just 3 days** (15 to 17 august 2011) which were active at 5 to 40 miles from Dajla. See Table below (next page).

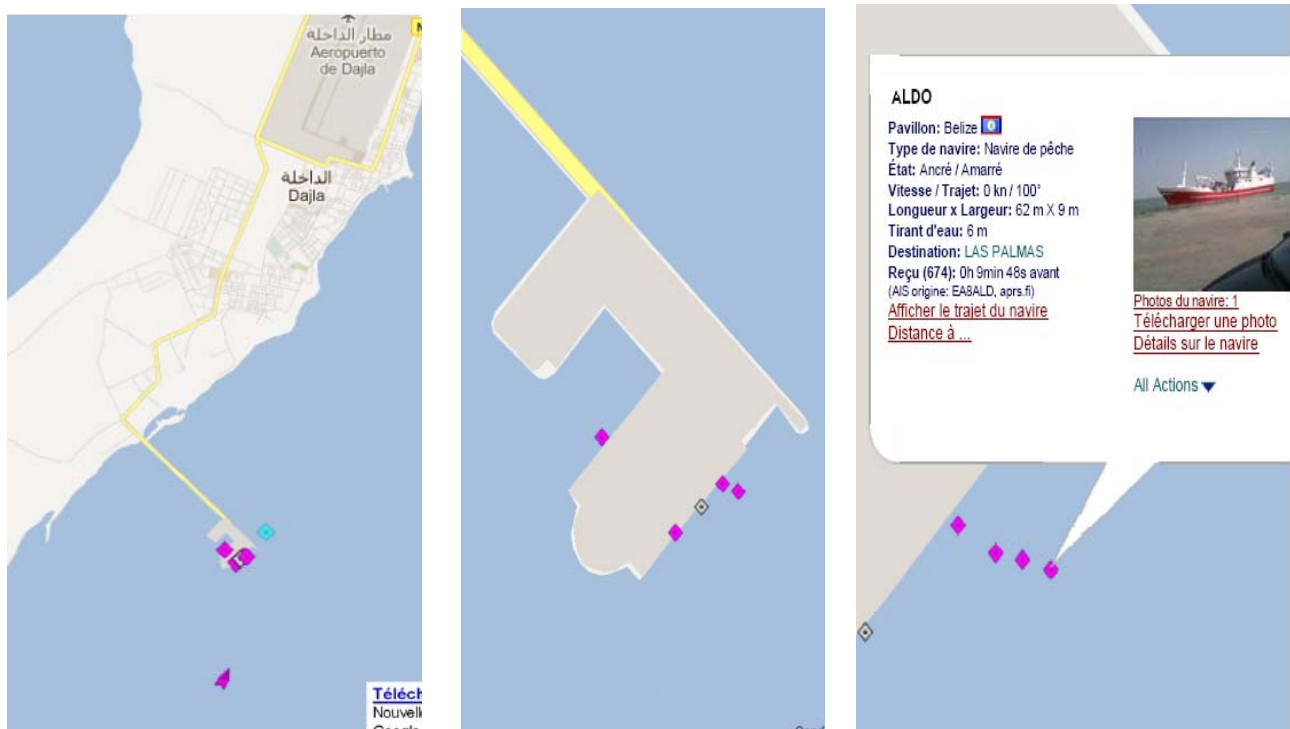


AIS-emitting fishing vessels around Dajla (Al Dakhla) on 17-august-2011



vessel name	flag country	MMSI	IMO	length
Aldo	Belize	312341000	7393705	62
KROSSFJORD	Belize	312995000	9147148	58
Sopelagic (ex-Themis)	Belize	312498000	7643007	40
Zander	Belize	312506000	7712767	60
Midsjo	Comores	616798000	7600366	
HELEN-MARY	Germany	211238930	9126364	116
Aig	Morocco	242925000	7922386	49
AL Hamd	Morocco	242974000	7528984	40
Alloft-2	Morocco	242952000		58
Allotf-1	Morocco	242942000		
Allotf-3	Morocco	242926000	7911026	57
AZROU-1	Morocco	242963000	9098646	44
MIDOY DAKHLA I	Morocco	242889000	7424671	70
Mist	Morocco	242045000	9163180	48
DIRK-DIETERIK KW-172	Netherlands	244799000	8918318	110
Iskatel-2	Panama	372715000	8418667	48
Admiral Starikov	Russia	273529300	8607218	116
Alexander Kosarev	Russia	273526300	8607153	120
Alexandr Mironenko	Russia	273523300	8607177	107
Kapitan Bogomolov	Russia	273528800	9655978	107
Lazurnyy	Russia	273250200	8729654	104
MIKHAIL VERBITSKIY	Russia	273219600	7703986	88
Oleg-Naydenov	Russia	273526800	8607309	120
Vasiliy Lozovskiy	Russia	273527800	8607323	107
ZAMOSKVORECHVE	Russia	273259100	8721129	104
Poseydon-1	St Kitts Nevis	341479000	9447110	55

### AIS-emitting vessels around Dajla (Al Dakhla) on 15-16-17 august 2011



**Dajla (Al Dakhla): city & harbour, quais facilities; Belize-flagged pelagic trawler ALDO: 16aug-2011**