

# [***Soccer jersey dispute between Algeria and Morocco clubs over Western Sahara goes to sports court***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BXW-KFM1-DYMD-6088-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Byline:** GRAHAM DUNBAR, AP Sports Writer

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**Body**

GENEVA — A soccer ***politics*** dispute between Algeria and Morocco over a map of disputed Western Sahara territory on a team jersey will go to a full appeal hearing at the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

The [*court said Thursday*](https://www.tas-cas.org/fileadmin/user_upload/CAS_Media_Release_10528.pdf) the two sides “are currently exchanging written submissions” and set no timetable for appointing a panel of judges and setting a date for a hearing.

The Algerian soccer federation and the USM Alger club from Algiers are challenging a decision by the Confederation of African Football to let Moroccan club RS Berkane wear a team jersey that includes disputed territory on a map of Morocco.

The dispute already affected the teams’ semifinal of the CAF Confederation Cup, in which USM Alger is the defending champion. Neither semifinal game scheduled on April 21 and 28 was played and both were awarded by CAF as 3-0 wins to Berkane.

Berkane is scheduled to play the two-leg final on May 12 and 19 — against Zamalek of Egypt — and the court did not indicate Thursday if the Algerian appeal will be judged before those games.

Western Sahara is a former Spanish colony annexed by Morocco in 1975. The United Nations brokered a cease-fire between Morocco and the pro-independence Polisario Front, which is supported by Algeria, that held until four years ago.

[*Algeria cut diplomatic ties*](https://apnews.com/article/africa-business-algeria-morocco-0ae243127776fe3754d72de5c7dd6f1d) with Morocco in 2021.

The [*laws of soccer*](https://www.theifab.com/laws/latest/the-players-equipment/#other-equipment) state that “equipment must not have any political, religious or personal slogans, statements or images.”

Berkane arrived for the April 21 game in Algiers and had its team uniforms seized at the airport by Algerian authorities.

CAF refused an Algerian request to prohibit the shirts and, after Berkane refused to wear replacement shirts provided by USM Alger, the game did not go ahead. CAF ruled the Algerian club was in breach of competition rules and Berkane was awarded a 3-0 win by default.

An urgent appeal by the Algerians to suspend CAF's ruling on the shirt was denied last week by the sports court in Lausanne, Switzerland.

On April 28, USM Alger went to Berkane’s stadium for the second leg but refused to play if the hosts wore the jerseys with the map. CAF awarded a second default win to Berkane.

The full appeal in the case has now been brought against CAF, the Moroccan soccer federation and Berkane. One of the African soccer body’s most influential officials, FIFA Council member Fouzi Lekjaa, is president of the Moroccan federation and a former president of the Berkane club.

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AP soccer: [*https://apnews.com/hub/soccer*](https://apnews.com/hub/soccer)

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