

# Morocco bans some vegetable exports to West Africa amid rising prices

By [Ahmed Eljechimi](#)

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Morocco has barred fruit and vegetable traders from exporting tomatoes, onions and potatoes to West African countries, its fresh produce association and a government official said on Thursday.



People buy fruits and vegetables at a traditional market in Dar Bouazza on the outskirts of Casablanca, Morocco, May 16, 2018.  
REUTERS/Youssef Boudlal

The decision by the agricultural food export authority, Morocco Fodex, was informed to traders by phone and it cited a need to ensure food security at home after tomato prices rose, a senior official in the association said.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the ban had been imposed from Thursday on any truck carrying the vegetables to West African markets.

Tomato prices have recently risen sharply after cold temperatures and higher fertiliser prices reduced production. Traders said tomato sales to Europe, where they fetch higher prices, have also raised prices domestically.

## Ensuring regular,normal supplies

Government spokesperson Mustafa Baitas said in a weekly news conference that the government was "taking all measures to ensure regular and normal supplies" for the domestic market.

Morocco recorded price inflation of 6.6% last year, but food inflation surged by 11%.

Baitas declined to comment when asked about the export ban or whether it might be extended to other countries. Morocco is a significant exporter of fresh produce to Europe.

Mohamed Zemrani, the deputy head of the Moroccan association of African market suppliers, said the ban would harm fresh produce traders. "The export ban means bankruptcy for many suppliers with the loss of outstanding payments exposing many to lawsuits as well as a loss of job opportunities," he told Reuters.

Morocco's farming sector's exports rose 20% to a record 80 billion dirhams (\$ 7.8 bn) last year despite the worst drought in decades.

Morocco's trade with Africa in 2022 rose 45% to a record 65 billion dirhams (\$ 6.3 bn) as the number of trucks crossing Morocco to African markets rose 88% to 45,000, official data showed. Agricultural food products accounted for 28% of that.

Zemrani said the ban had been instituted without any dialogue with traders and it would have made more sense to ask traders to reduce exports rather than stopping it altogether.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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