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TELL THEM I EXIST

A SAHRAWI STORY

Collaboration e-graine d'images


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ARABE SAHRAOUIE
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A FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

Tell them I exist sheds a light on the little known situation of Western Sahara by telling the story of Naâma Asfari, a Sahrawi independence activist and human rights jurist, and of his wife, Claude Mangin, who has supported her husband and the Sahrawi's struggle for freedom throughout the years.

Naâma Asfari was sentenced to 30 years in jail by a Moroccan Military Tribunal. He was trialed with 24 of his companions, accused of the deaths of 11 policemen during the dismantlement of a Sahrawi protest camp in Gdeim Izik, in November 2010. Since then, Naâma's wife Claude visits him in prison in Rabat every three months. From diplomatic meetings to prison visits, from submission of complaints for torture to support demonstrations, Claude continues to mobilize public opinion and raise awareness about the ongoing situation in Western Sahara and of the fate of her husband. She hopes he will one day be released or at least be given the opportunity to have a fair trial and have his voice heard.

GIVE A VOICE TO NAÂMA

Built around Claude's unremitting efforts to seek justice for her husband, *Tell Them I Exist* portrays Naâma's environment through the testimonies of people who assisted his trial.

Tell Them I Exist brings Naâma back to life through film by giving him a voice again – a selection of animation scenes and performances by a comedian interpreting texts written by Naâma in his prison cell in Morocco allows Naâma's words and actions to live again through video.

« This trial may be the only opportunity for us to say what we want to say, for us to be heard, to scream if we have to. Our voice will carry the people's voice. This will be a historical moment. »

Naâma Asfari



A CONFLICT OF OVER 40 YEARS

The last colony in Africa

Western Sahara is an ancient Spanish colony in Africa. Today the territory is under Morocco control but has been in conflict with the Kingdom since 1975 and is still considered by the UN as a « non-autonomous territory ». The Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), the Sahrawi people's state, was claimed in 1976 and is recognised by 83 countries. Authority of the Moroccan Kingdom over the Sahrawi territory has never been recognised despite Morocco's occupation of this strip of land for over 40 years. The United Nations considers the ruling independence-seeking Polisario Front to be the legitimate representative of the Sahrawi people and maintains that the people of Western Sahara have a right to « self-determination and independence. »

165 000 displaced Sahrawis live in refugee camps in Tindouf, in the bordering Algerian desert. A mined wall 1677 miles long was built by Morocco to secure the territories it controls near the ocean, the most economically interesting region rich in phosphates and fish, from the Polisario Front. The wall cuts the Sahrawi territory in two, leaving in the East a thin strip of desert, administered by the Polisario Front.

A Referendum Always Pushed Back

In 1991, the UN approved a conflict resolution plan which created a specialised UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) whose aim was to establish a referendum on the territory's independence. However, to date the referendum on the independence of the Sahrawi people has yet to take place. Obstructions persist, mainly with the complicity of the Algerian authorities allied with Morocco and France. Incredibly, the MINURSO is the only UN Mission to not include a human rights monitoring mandate.

The Sahrawi's Peaceful Struggle

The Sahrawi people are daily victims of discrimination, arbitrary arrests and torture, violations which are regularly reported on by local and international NGOs. In 2005, peaceful activism awoke, an intifada bringing together the Sahrawi people whose fight for freedom culminated during the Gdeim Izik protest camp in October 2010.



A PARTICIPATORY DOCUMENTARY

This documentary was made possible thanks to the generous donations obtained through a crowd-funding campaign launched in December 2013 which brought together over 300 individuals in France, Morocco, Western Sahara and other parts of the world.

We would like to thank those who gave spontaneously, those associations who generously supported our work and the technicians who made it all possible – without you this adventure would not have been possible !

Share this movie

Creating this documentary is already a huge step but making it available to the most people possible is essential in making the Sahrawi people's voice heard and helping them obtain justice.

If you wish to organise a film screening in your city, obtain information on broadcast rights, contact the director and producers, write an article about the documentary, propose a partnership, or simply get in contact with us, please send us an email at the following address :
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| Tell them I exist - VOST - 59 mn - France 2016 - HD

| To follow the movie :  Dis-leur-que-jexiste

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