

Press Release - for immediate release - 14 June 2019

Western Sahara comes to Melbourne - Journalism in a no-go area

Ms Nazha Al Khalidi, a Saharawi journalist faces trial on 24 June for her work to expose human rights abuses in Western Sahara when she live-streamed footage of police beating peaceful protesters. Her case is described in detail by a group of Canadian lawyers, in a [letter dated 6 June](#) sent to the Moroccan minister of Justice.

Nazha and her colleagues in Equipe Media can be seen at work in a documentary, ***Rifles or Graffiti, being screened on Tuesday 18 June at 6.30pm at ACMI in the Treasury Theatre, Lower Plaza, 1 Macarthur Place.*** To screen this film the Melbourne Filmoteca has teamed up with the Australia Western Sahara Association (AWSA) to provide an opportunity to Melbourne audiences to learn about this “no-go zone” for journalists in Western Sahara. Given the lengthy record of journalists deported from the country, you can appreciate what an achievement it was for the film maker, Jordi Oriola to get in, film and get out again with his recordings intact. Over 190 international journalists, lawyers and human rights observers have been expelled from Western Sahara since 2014.

"Western Sahara - a Desert for Journalists" is the title of a [new report](#) launched on 11 June in Madrid by Reporters without Borders. Morocco systematically refuses entry to Western Sahara to international observers and journalists, with the result that very little is known beyond its borders about what is going on there. The report praises the work of citizen journalists such as those from Equipe Media on whom the world relies for information about what is happening in Western Sahara.

We invite journalists and everyone concerned about freedom of the press and human rights to come and see the film and show support for the brave journalists, like Nazha, determined to get their story out to the world. See details here:

<https://www.acmi.net.au/events/rifles-or-graffiti/>

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For background information on Western Sahara please check: www.awsa.org.au

Should you need further information please contact:

Cate Lewis (AWSA): 0407 2888 358

<http://www.awsa.org.au/>

Eliana Jones (Melbourne Filmoteca): 0407 486 755

<http://melbournefilmoteca.org/>

