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## AGLIGIULHUM EL WALI MOHAMED

Agligiulhum was born five years prior to the Moroccan occupation of Western Sahara. As a child she observed how her family, and Saharawis were living under a hidden form of pressure and tension. How Saharawi houses were monitored, and spies were everywhere. She saw how her mother, and her neighbors were whispering between them news about arbitrary kidnappings, and detention. Agligiulhum saw how her mother couldn't sleep, without understanding the real reason behind her worries. Many decades later she would publish a beautiful article in Arabic about a childhood under occupation.

### School Years

The Saharawi National Radio was an alternative educator for her, and Saharawis who were forced to only learn about Morocco in school. Agligiulhum adored school, and performed very well. Unfortunately, she was the victim of an expulsion policy which mostly impacted Saharawi children. Most Saharawi families hesitated to enroll their children in Moroccan schools. This is a natural result of years of horror, fear, and the systematic disappearance of Saharawis. This meant that some families enrolled their children first after they turned nine while normally the children should start school at seven. This policy of excluding children who were older than seven from schools impacted solely Saharawi children.

In school Saharawi students were discriminated against by the school administration. They were monitored by secret agents who were present at the school. Saharawi students were forced to write creative texts, and poetry about the Moroccan green march. For Saharawis students this date marks the start of their parents', and nation's nightmare.

If they refused to write as instructed, they would be given grade zero in their exam. The political situation had severe impacts on the children psychologically, and therefore also on their school performance at school. The Saharawi children were forced to sing the Moroccan national anthem. Agligiulhum, and her Saharawi friends used to sing a traditional Saharawi song which children sing on the night of revelation in Islam known as Laylat al-Qadr, (Night of Power). Traditionally, children would go from tent to tent to ask for candies or any other gifts. This shows how Agligiulhum and these children were protesting in their innocent but effective way.

Agligiulhum was determined to finish her education, and went back to school again as an adult to obtain her high school diploma as an external candidate, "Bac libre". However, she never managed to start her studies at university because of taking care of her young children, and for financial reasons. Agligiulhum started to become active in 1992, participating in peaceful demonstrations, political forums, and celebrations of the Saharawi national day.

## **Financial Punishments**

Morocco has systematically used various methods of physical violence; torture, long period of arbitrary detention, isolation. Constant surveillance. Defamation. Making drugs easily accessible for young Saharawis. Even though it is not something new, recently Morocco has become more aggressive in punishing activists and their families economically.

Generally, Saharawis families are the poorest in their own country. A few Saharawi families receive a small amount of money which barely covers basic needs. In 2019 Agligiulhum and her fellow activists in her city were deprived of it, and they were given the choice to sign a written declaration that they would stop their activism. They refused. The occupying administration is using them as an example for anyone who has the intention to challenge or fight the Moroccan occupation. Morocco has succeeded in starving and impoverishing Saharawis in the occupied territories.

In her city Smara, there are no natural resources or industries. The jobs that exist are mostly public administrative positions which are often given to Moroccans. It is heartbreaking for her, and other leading activists to see how the occupation is luring youth in the occupied territories into a life of drugs, and that the unemployed Saharawi youth fall into this trap which has been designed to distract them from their struggle.

## **Agligiulhum, the Writer**

Agligiulhum has written several articles, poetry, and verses about the early years of invasion and of arbitrary arrest. Her writing is all of political nature.

**Interviewed and written by Asria Mohamed**