



Press release

URGENT CALL FOR THE FREEDOM OF FILMMAKER MOHAMMAD RASOULOF FACING INCARCERATION IN IRAN

The European Film Academy, The Cannes Film Festival, the Deutsche Filmakademie, the Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, the Filmfest Hamburg, the IDFA - International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam, the International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR), the Netherlands Film Fund and the Accademia del cinema italiano-Premi David di Donatello wish to express their deepest concern about the imminent incarceration of the Iranian film director Mohammad Rasoulof.

Rasoulof, having already won awards at Cannes, just won the Golden Bear at the 70th Berlin International Film Festival for his latest work. *THERE IS NO EVIL*, like his previous films, casts a critical eye on the consequences of life under authoritarian rule.

Mohammad Rasoulof has just been summoned by the Special Prosecutor's Office for Offenses Relating to Media and Culture to serve one year in prison. On July 23, 2019 the Iranian Revolutionary Court had sentenced the director to one year in prison and a two-year prohibition against working as a director for alleged propaganda against the government, in addition to imposing a two-year ban on leaving the country and getting involved in any social or political activity.

"Summoning me to serve my prison sentence only reveals a small fraction of the intolerance and anger that is characteristic of the Iranian regime's response to criticism. Many cultural activists are in prison for criticizing the government. The widespread and uncontrollable spread of the Covid-19 virus in Iranian prisons seriously endangers their lives. These conditions call for an immediate response from the international community." Mohammad Rasoulof

We strongly protest against the summons of Mohammad Rasoulof and urgently call on the Iranian authorities to ensure his safety and health. We also ask for the charges against Mohammad Rasoulof to be retracted and the travel ban against him to be lifted immediately and unconditionally and call on festivals around the world, cinemas and all artists to do the same.

Wim Wenders, President of the European Film Academy declares: *"Our colleague Mohammad Rasoulof is an artist who keeps telling us about a reality we would otherwise know little about. His Golden Bear winning film *THERE IS NO EVIL* is a deeply humane portrait of people in extreme situations, situations no human should be forced to experience. We need voices like that of Mohammad Rasoulof, voices defending human rights, freedom and dignity."*

Ulrich Matthes, President of the Deutsche Filmakademie adds: *"Mohammad Rasoulof is an outstanding artist whose deeply humane films about freedom and oppression have reached so many people worldwide throughout his career. He is a representative master of Iranian cinema: a rich film culture that has provided us with some of the most compelling stories about the human condition. Mohammad Rasoulof's films not only tell us about life in Iran but also speak to us in the universal language of cinema to promote empathy and peace. We need artists like Mohammad Rasoulof to be*

able to raise their voice without fear of reprisal.”

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