



Press Release

The Berlinale protests against severe sentences for opposition directors in Iran

The Berlin International Film Festival sharply condemns the harsh sentences handed down to the renowned Iranian director Jafar Panahi and his directing colleague Mohammad Rasoulof. Accused of spreading "propaganda against the system", Panahi has been sentenced to six years in prison and banned from practicing his profession for 20 years. Rasoulof has also received a six-year prison sentence.

In his films, Jafar Panahi provides a critical perspective on the social situation in his homeland and he is a supporter of the opposition movement against Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. The conviction of both artists is an infringement of the freedom of opinion and the freedom of art. The unrestricted right of assembly and freedom of speech and opinion are not only a part of international human rights conventions, which Iran has signed, but also part of the Iranian Constitution.

The Berlin International Film Festival invited the renowned Iranian director Jafar Panahi to participate in the International Jury of the 61st Berlin International Film Festival.

Berlinale Director Dieter Kosslick: "We are very concerned and filled with indignation over the conviction of Jafar Panahi. It is shocking that a renowned director is punished so severely for his artistic work. Jafar Panahi can be sure he has our full support."

Press Office
December 22, 2010

*61. Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
10. – 20.02.2011*

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