For Immediate Release

Human Rights Watch Film Festival, UK and Ireland
Empowering Stories Celebrating Courageous People

DIGITAL EDITION
22 May - 5 June 2020
streaming on Curzon Home Cinema
copresented by Barbican, Curzon, Regent Street Cinema

#HRWFFLDN
@hrwfilmfestival

(London, May 7, 2020) -- The UK edition of the 2020 Human Rights Watch Film Festival is making a digital return for two weeks, from 22 May to 5 June, following the festival’s early closure in March due to COVID-19 health crisis.

The film festival, generously supported by players of People’s Postcode Lottery, will stream a collection of nine international titles on Curzon Home Cinema, co-presented with partners Barbican, Curzon and Regents Street Cinema. Digital audiences also have the opportunity to join live and rigorous interactive discussions for every title with the filmmakers, Human Rights Watch experts, and special guests.

“At this time when the world feels most intensely the interconnectedness of humanity, the festival was more determined than ever to bring our UK audiences this digital edition,” said John Biaggi, director of the Human Rights Watch Film Festival. “These nine essential films present urgent human rights issues we can all relate to. Now more than ever, human rights are global. What impacts one society, what impacts one family, affects all of us.”

Said Gali Gold, Head of Cinema, Barbican, “The festival allows us to sympathise with others, learn about other peoples’ and communities’ experiences and points of view, and move us sometimes into action. At this particular moment in time these connections feel more important than ever. As the principle venue for the London festival, we are very pleased that our audiences can engage with this collection of films and discussions, albeit from their homes”.

Available to audiences across the UK and Ireland these documentary and feature films – most of which are made by and about women – expose and humanise crises related to women’s rights, inspiring leaders, the power of journalism, refugee and exiled individuals and families living with trauma, indigenous rights, the on-going struggle for disability rights and Bangladeshi women working in the fashion industry.

The following titles will be available to stream on Curzon Home Cinema from 22 May to 5 June. For details about how to join the live webinar Q&A sessions see Human Rights Watch Film Festival Streamed Q&A schedule. All Q&A times are correct for BST.

**I AM NOT ALONE**
Dir. Garin Hovannisian
2019, 90 min, documentary

**Live webinar Q&A: Friday 22 May, 9.30pm** – Garin Hovannisian (filmmaker), Alec Mouhibian (producer), Rachel Denber, (Deputy Director, Europe and Central Asia Division, Human Rights Watch).

On Easter Sunday 2018, Nikol Pashinyan put on his backpack and started on a 120 mile walk across Armenia to protest President Serzh Sargsyan’s attempt to stay in power for a third term. Nikol’s solitary act of peaceful protest would mark the start of a 25-day revolution that inspired thousands of protesters across the country to peacefully join together with one clear demand: Serzh Sargsyan must go. With remarkable access to key players reaching the highest levels of government and with footage recorded by phone wielding protesters, *I Am Not Alone* captures the energy and hopefulness of grassroots protest and direct action. This emboldening “velvet revolution” started with one man who, standing firm in his belief that he was not alone, convinced a nation that it deserved more.

Film website: [https://www.iamnotalonefilm.com/](https://www.iamnotalonefilm.com/)

**IN MY BLOOD IT RUNS**
Dir. Maya Newell
2019, 84 min, documentary

**Live webinar Q&A: Saturday 23 May, 12.00pm** – Maya Newell (filmmaker and special guest(s), moderated by Elaine Pearson (Australia Director, Human Rights Watch).

“I was born a little Aboriginal kid,” explains 10-year-old Dujuan. “That means I had a memory – a memory about being Aboriginal.” Born in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Australia, Dujuan has a strong connection to his culture, speaks three languages, and is regarded as a healer in his community. But within the colonised school system, his strength, gifts, and intellect go unnoticed, his culture ignored and deleted from school books, and he acts out, attracting attention from the police and child welfare system. At the time of filming, 100 percent of the youth in Alice Springs detention centres were Aboriginal. In this powerful portrait, made in collaboration with Dujuan’s family, Maya Newell puts the beauty, resilience, and challenges of the Northern Territory’s Indigenous children in the spotlight.

LEFTOVER WOMEN
Dir. Hilla Medalia, Shosh Shlam
2019, 84 min, documentary
Live webinar Q&A: Sunday 24 May, 8.30pm – Hilla Medalia (filmmaker), Shosh Shlam (filmmaker), Yaqiu Wang, (China Researcher, Human Rights Watch), moderated by Gali Gold (Head of Cinema, Barbican).

In China, unmarried women over the age of 27 are deemed “sheng nu” or “leftover”. As an effect of the now-defunct one-child policy there are 30 million more men than women, leaving single women under immense social pressures to marry, and fast, or be rejected from society. Public dating contests, “marriage markets” where city sidewalks are lined with parents advertising their children’s attributes, and government-sponsored matchmaking festivals are just some of the humiliating ordeals that unwed women face. This eye-opening documentary follows three women in their gruelling quest to find a husband, weighing the cost of family and society’s approval against their own chances of happiness.

Film website: https://www.metfilmsales.com/production/leftover-women/

LOVE CHILD
Dir. Eva Mulvad
2019, 112 min, documentary
Live webinar Q&A: Tuesday 26 May, 8.30pm – Eva Mulvad (filmmaker), Yusaf Ciftci (VOICES Network Ambassador)

An intimately filmed, epic love story introduces Leila and Sahand at the start of a turbulent five-year period beginning with their escape from Iran where, while married to other people, they fell in love. Since adultery is punishable by death, and divorce forbidden, they run for their lives and start over again as a family in Turkey with their young son, Mani, who doesn’t yet know that Sahand is his biological father. Suddenly living together in a strange new land battling tightening asylum laws to find security after years in limbo, they are learning more about each other in the toughest of circumstances and facing hurdles that test the strength of their relationship.


BORN IN EVIN
Dir. Maryam Zaree
2019, 98 min, documentary
Live webinar Q&A: Friday 29 May, 8.30pm – Maryam Zaree (filmmaker), Tara Sepehri Far (Middle East and North Africa researcher, Human Rights Watch) moderated by Gali Gold (Head of Cinema, Barbican).
When she was 12 years old, actress and filmmaker Maryam Zaree found out that she was one of a number of babies born inside Evin, Iran’s most notorious political prison. Maryam’s parents were imprisoned shortly after Ayatollah Khomeini came to power in 1979, a period in which tens of thousands of political dissidents were arrested and tortured. With Born in Evin, Maryam confronts decades of silence in her family and embarks on an exploration into the circumstances of her birth. On this vulnerable, lyrical journey Maryam considers the impact of trauma on the bodies and souls of survivors and their children, leading her to question how her generation can relate to their own history while also respecting the people they love as they prefer to heal in silence.

Film website: https://syndicadosfs.com/born-in-evin/

RADIO SILENCE
Dir. Juliana Fanjul
2019, 79 min, documentary
Live webinar Q&A: Saturday 30 May, 8.30pm – Juliana Fanjul (filmmaker), José Miguel Vivanco (Executive Director, Americas Division, Human Rights Watch).

To millions of people in Mexico, the incorruptible journalist and news anchor Carmen Aristegui is regarded as the trusted alternative voice to official government spin, fighting daily against deliberate disinformation spread through news sources, government corruption, and the related drugs trade. When she is fired by a radio station in 2015 after revealing a scandal involving then-President Enrique Peña Nieto, Carmen - with her dedicated journalist colleagues - decides to build a separate news platform. Facing threats of violence in the wake of a prominent journalist’s vicious murder, they must overcome fear for their personal well-being to continue in a shared fight for democracy and justice.

Film website: https://www.akkafilms.ch/en/radio-silence/

FAR FROM THE TREE
Dir. Rachel Dretzin
2018, 93 min, documentary
Live webinar Q&A: Sunday 31 May, 8.30pm – Andrew Solomon (film participant and author of “Far From the Tree”), Shantha Rau Barriga (Disability Rights Director, Human Rights Watch) moderated by Graeme Reid (LGBT Rights Program Director, Human Rights Watch).

This life-affirming documentary follows the lives of Jack, Jason, Loini, and Trevor, who don’t fit society’s narrow definition of “normal.” We meet them and their families and discuss how expectations placed on children, parents, and families have such power to turn “unconditional love” on its head by ways of extraordinary challenges. Fascinated with this idea, writer and film subject Andrew Solomon’s work on this issue stems from his own traumatic experience coming out as gay to his parents. Rejected and cast aside, he tried everything to regain his parents’ love and be “normal,” including conversion therapy. In a quest for understanding, this film
encourages us to let go of our preconceptions – for example, about people with autism or dwarfism – and celebrate our loved ones for all that makes them uniquely themselves.

Film website: http://www.farfromthetreedoc.com/

MIDNIGHT TRAVELER
Dir. Hassan Fazili
2019, 87min, documentary
Live webinar Q&A: Thursday 4 June, 8.30pm – Ben Ward (UK Director ((Acting)) & Deputy Director Europe & Central Asia Division, Human Rights Watch), tbc additional panellist.

In 2015, after Hassan Fazili’s documentary Peace aired on Afghan national television, the Taliban assassinated the film’s main subject and put a price on Hassan’s head. Hassan looked at his wife and his daughters, and he knew they had to flee their home. Over the course of their multi-year saga in search of safety, the family grasped onto the only means they had to assert control over their situation: their camera-phones.

Hassan and his wife Fatima are both filmmakers, and they are educating their daughters and encouraging them to be artists. The whole family shot this autobiographical film, which began when they sought and were rejected for refugee protection and follows them along the notorious Balkan smuggling route. As they experienced increasingly degrading circumstances, the family latched on to filmmaking as a way to not just survive, but retain their humanity.

Midnight Traveler is a gripping vérité story made by a family on the run. Their unique access and artistic vision provide an intimate portrait of a loving family and the myriad fellow travellers they meet on their odyssey.


MADE IN BANGLADESH
Dir. Rubaiyat Hossain
2019, 95 min, drama
Live webinar Q&A: Friday 5 June, 8.30pm – Rubaiyat Hossain (filmmaker), Nisha Varia (Advocacy Director, Women’s Rights Division, Human Rights Watch), moderated by Annie Kelly (journalist and editor, Guardian Modern-day Slavery in Focus series).

Shimu works gruelling hours for paltry pay in a clothing factory in Dhaka, Bangladesh. After a fire in the factory leaves a co-worker dead, Shimu is moved to start a union. Her attempts are met with resistance at every step, not just from her patriarchal employers but also her colleagues, who fear losing their jobs. In the face of threats from management and violent disapproval of her husband, Shimu discovers a wealth of courage and tenacity she didn’t know she had. Channelling real-life stories that Bangladeshi filmmaker Rubaiyat Hossain encountered as a women’s rights activist, this empowering, layered drama shines a light on an oppressive industry, and demands our attention.


Prices for streaming Human Rights Watch Film Festival titles on Curzon Home Cinema: Midnight Travellers (£4.99), Far From the Tree (£3.99) and all others (£7.99).
All live webinar Q&As: FREE

For further information contact: Sarah Harvey: sarah@sarahharveypublicity.co.uk / 07958 597426


For downloadable images and press kits, please visit: http://ff.hrw.org/press
Please note that this page includes titles playing in all editions of the Human Rights Watch Film Festivals across various cities but not all films are playing in all cities.

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Human Rights Watch

How We Work
For more than 40 years, Human Rights Watch has defended people at risk of abuse. We practice a powerful, proven methodology: investigate abuses scrupulously, expose the facts widely, and relentlessly press those in power for change that respects rights.

Investigate
We are expert investigators.

Expose
We are effective communicators.

Change
We are determined advocates.

**What Our People Do**

Front-line investigations by expert researchers lie at the heart of Human Rights Watch’s work. Our researchers examine situations in some 100 countries around the world. They function as investigators, journalists, and advocates:

- Checking and cross-checking facts
- Being on the front line
- Partnering with local activists and human rights groups
- Exposing evidence of abuses
- Convincing key decision-makers to act
- Providing expertise
- Staying the course

**Human Rights Watch Film Festival**

Through the *Human Rights Watch Film Festival* we bear witness to human rights violations and create a forum for courageous individuals on both sides of the lens to empower audiences with the knowledge that personal commitment can make a difference. The film festival brings human rights abuses to life through storytelling in a way that challenges each individual to engage and demand justice for all.

**People’s Postcode Lottery**

Thanks to players of People’s Postcode Lottery for their support of the Human Rights Watch Film Festival. People’s Postcode Lottery manages multiple society lotteries promoted by different charities and good causes. People play with their chosen postcodes for a chance to win cash prizes. A minimum of 32 percent from each subscription goes directly to charities and good causes across Great Britain and internationally -- players have raised £500 million so far. For further information visit: [www.postcodelottery.co.uk](http://www.postcodelottery.co.uk)