



**IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 8 February, 2024**

**The courage of individuals standing up for freedom and rights shine through  
at the 28<sup>th</sup> Human Rights Watch Film Festival  
London Edition, 14-24 March 2024**

**Presented in Partnership with Barbican Cinema & Rich Mix**

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(London, 8 February, 2024) – The Human Rights Watch Film Festival, now in its 28<sup>th</sup> year in London, presents a line-up of 10 award-winning, international feature-length films in partnership with Barbican Cinema and Rich Mix and generously supported by players of People’s Postcode Lottery.

The festival programme, presented at the Barbican and Rich Mix from 14-22 March, 2024, includes in-depth Q&As and panel discussions with filmmakers, film participants, activists and Human Rights Watch researchers following all screenings. The majority of the programme will also stream across the UK and Ireland on the festival website from 18-24 March.



*Summer Qamp, Closing Night Film*

This year’s edition celebrates the convergence of art and human rights and highlights the role of youth in rising up to confront systems of power.

**John Biaggi, director of the Human Rights Watch Film Festival**, said: *“This year our programme of seven documentaries and three dramas spotlights the energy and determination of young people, art*

*and human rights and opposing systems of power - told through the lens of women and girls, queer and trans youth, Indigenous environmental activists and exiled artists. We are very happy to present this year's programme at two of London's stand-out cinemas, our long-standing venue partner the Barbican, and for the first-time at Rich Mix, a venue we've long admired for its ambitious and community-based programming."*

**Laura Chow, head of charities at People's Postcode Lottery**, said: *"The Human Rights Watch Film Festival inspires us to celebrate the courage of individuals who defend freedom and rights. I'm delighted funding raised by our players continues to support the Film Festival's work giving marginalised people a platform to tell their stories, raising awareness on key human rights issues, and encouraging justice and equality."*

Human Rights Watch Film Festival values the importance of making the programme accessible and will present a relaxed screening at the Barbican. Five of the films will be audio described and play with captions, with live-transcription for the conversations to follow. In addition, the festival has several ticketing options for audience members for whom cost is a barrier.

Opening and Closing night events take place at the Barbican, both attended in person by the filmmakers and expert speakers.

The opening night film, ***Mediha***, made by a documentary filmmaker, Hasan Oswald, is a heartfelt and intimate account of Mediha Alhamad, a teenage Yazidi girl, recently returned from Islamic State (ISIS) captivity, who turns the camera on herself as she initiates investigations into the crimes committed against her, and in the process stands up for her family and the Yazidi people.

In the closing night film, ***Summer Qamp***, non-binary filmmaker Jen Markovitz brings an uplifting, funny and moving look at Camp fYrefly in the forests of Alberta, Canada, where LGBTQ+ teens explore their authentic selves, make friends, and build community—far away from the fierce political battle being waged against them.

**The energy and power of young people continues in two more festival titles: *Coconut Head Generation***, directed by Alain Kassanda, provides front-row seats for lively, political, and impassioned debates in a student film club in Nigeria as they unpack critical issues facing young people today – from colonialism to government corruption, gender, and equality. In one of three festival dramas this year, ***Power Alley*** directed by Lillah Halla, depicts a young and vibrant LGBTQ+-inclusive volleyball team in Brazil who support and fight for each other's dignity and rights, especially when one of their team members must seek an abortion in a country where it is criminalised in most circumstances.

**Speaking truth to power is at the heart of four films in the festival** including two stand-out dramas. Former news journalist turned feature filmmaker Mehdi Fikri's debut film ***After the Fire***, is a devastating look at a family's fight for truth and justice after their son is killed at the hands of the police, which pulls back the curtain on France's history of racial profiling and police violence. The sharp-witted and beautifully acted ***Inshallah a Boy***, directed by Amjad Al Rasheed, features Nawal, a quietly powerful Jordanian mother whose husband unexpectedly passes away, leaving her to battle against a patriarchal legal system and attempts by her brother-in-law to claim all of her assets and guardianship of her daughter.

In the documentary ***Land of My Dreams***, the filmmaker, Nausheen Khan, draws on her identity as an Indian Muslim woman. She intimately captures intergenerational, multi-faith women at the forefront of a nationwide non-violent resistance movement, which began at Shaheen Bagh, a Muslim neighbourhood in Delhi, to protest the Indian government's Citizenship Amendment Act, which overtly discriminates against Muslims. ***We Are Guardians***, co-directed by Edivan Guajajara, Chelsea Greene, and Rob Grobman centres the essential and dangerous work of Indigenous forest

guardians battling governmental indifference, politically connected agribusinesses, cattle ranchers, and illegal loggers as they fight to protect their traditional land in the increasingly vulnerable Amazon rainforest.

**The intersection between art and human rights** is strikingly demonstrated in two films in the festival. ***A Revolution on Canvas*** is a profile of one of Iran's most revolutionary artists, Nickzad (Nicky) Nodjoumi. Filmmakers Sara Nodjoumi, his daughter, and Till Schauder create a rich tapestry of family history, artistic freedom, politics, and persecution that boldly reveals the power of art in the fight for human rights. ***Tree of Violence*** directed by Anna Moiseenko, brings to life the work of the Russian graphic artist and activist Victoria (Vika) Lomasko through a striking mix of fly-on-the-wall and animation. The film follows Vika as she investigates the connection between domestic and state-sponsored violence and patriarchy through her art, while the invasion of Ukraine unfolds and her personal safety in her homeland becomes less assured.

As always, the festival strives to prioritise space for identities, viewpoints, forms of expertise and experiences either silenced or marginalised in the film industry, news, and media. The festival is also committed to expanding opportunities for audience members to enjoy the events together and is working to create features that more people can access, including people who are blind or have low vision, and those who are deaf or hard of hearing. Five of the festival films this year will be audio described and play with captions, with live-transcription for the conversations to follow. [See the website for accessibility specifications for each film in the line-up.](#)

Details about the screenings and discussions can be found at <https://ff.hrw.org/london>

## **Festival Programme:**

### **Opening Night**

#### **[Mediha](#)**

**Thursday 14 March, 6.15pm, Barbican Cinema 1**

**Followed by in-person discussion and Q&A with the filmmaker, Hasan Oswald moderated by Yasmine Ahmed, UK director at Human Rights Watch**

**Film also streaming across the UK + Ireland from 18-24 March**

This film is captioned and audio-described; the discussion panel following the film will be live-captioned.

In 2014, ISIS committed atrocity crimes against the Yazidis, a small religious and ethnic minority in Northern Iraq. Those who survived are still unable to return home. Mediha Alhamad and her brothers, Ghazwan and Adnan, must now rebuild their lives with the whereabouts of their parents and brother unknown. Alhamad takes viewers on her quest for justice by initiating investigations to uncover the truth about the people who caused her family harm and sharing her story with the world. Executive produced by Emma Thompson.

*Winner, U.S. Competition Grand Jury Prize, DOC NYC 2023*

*"It's empowering to see Mediha as both a character and creator. As a viewer, you really empathise with her and understand why it's so important to bring home the thousands of Yazidis who are still missing, compensate survivors, and hold perpetrators accountable."*

Sarah Sanbar, Middle East and North Africa researcher, Human Rights Watch

Iraq/Syria/Turkey / 2023 / dir Hasan Oswald (he/him) / doc / English, Arabic, Turkish, Kurdish with English subtitles / 90m

UK Premiere

**Closing Night**

**[Summer Qamp](#)**

**Friday 22 March, 6.15pm, Barbican Cinema 1**

**Followed by in-person discussion with the filmmaker, Jen Markowitz.**

**Film also streaming across the UK + Ireland from 18-24 March**

This film is captioned and audio-described; the discussion panel following the film will be live-captioned.

**Summer Qamp** follows a group of LGBTQ+ youth as they attend a camp like no other: a judgement-free zone where they explore their authentic selves while building community, finding joy, and making memories that will last a lifetime. Uplifting, funny, and moving, *Summer Qamp* joins the campers as they make friends, explore crushes, and share experiences around transitioning and intersectionality, while never losing sight of the bravery of these young protagonists whose identities are challenged by society outside of the camp boundaries.

*Official Selection, Toronto International Film Festival 2023*

*"The film captures such a range of conversations, everything from coming out to your parents, to working through self-harm, to how an alien looking at earth through a telescope would perceive it."*  
Bill Van Esveld, associate children's rights director, Human Rights Watch

Canada / 2023 / dir Jen Markowitz / doc / English / 80m

UK Premiere

**[We Are Guardians](#)**

**Friday, March 15, 8.30pm, Rich Mix**

**Followed by in-person discussion with the activist and film participant, Puyr Temb   and Andrea Carvalho, senior environment and human rights research assistant at Human Rights Watch.**

**Film also streaming across the UK + Ireland from 18-24 March**

This film is captioned and audio-described; the discussion panel following the film will be live-captioned

Meet Brazilian Indigenous activists fighting to protect their home, an illegal logger in a desperate financial state, and a landowner driven to preserve the rich ecosystem at all costs. Directed by an Indigenous activist and environmental filmmakers, produced by Fisher Stevens, and executive produced by Leonardo DiCaprio, this film's intimate storytelling provides a human entry-point into the Amazon's critical situation that impacts us all.

*"We Are Guardians is a poignant portrayal of the diverse group of people on the front line of efforts to save the Brazilian Amazon. The filmmakers expertly dissect the economic drivers that fuel large-scale environmental destruction, while exposing the corruption and partisan politics that enable it. A loud call to action."*

Luciana T  llez Ch  vez, senior environment and human rights researcher, Human Rights Watch

Brazil, USA / 2023 / co-dirs Edivan Guajajara, Chelsea Greene, Rob Grobman /Portuguese, Tupi, English with English subtitles / doc / 82m

**[A Revolution on Canvas](#)**

**Saturday, 16 March, 6pm, Barbican Cinema 2**

**Followed by in-person screening with the filmmakers, Sara Nodjoumi and Till Schauder.**

**Also showing as a [Relaxed Screening](#)**

**Friday, 22 March, 12 noon, Barbican Cinema 3, no discussion to follow**

**Film also streaming across the UK + Ireland from 18-24 March**

This film is captioned and audio-described; the discussion panel following the Saturday screening of the film will be live-captioned.

This art-heist-thriller-meets-portrait-documentary delves into the disappearance of over 100 "treasonous" paintings by the co-director's father, the revolutionary Iranian artist Nickzad (Nicky) Nodjoumi.

After an exhibition of Iranian artist Nicky Nodjoumi's work in 1980 is declared critical of the regime, it is vandalised by Islamist radicals, and he is forced to flee Iran. Decades later, as protests erupt in Iran again, Nicky and his daughter Sara dive into the mystery surrounding the disappearance of more than 100 of his "treasonous" paintings. The result is a political thriller with intimate conversations that reveal the power of art, sacrifice, and family.

Courtesy of HBO Documentary Films

*"Eventually the central event of my father's life—the revolution and subsequent vandalism of his art show in Tehran—led us to a film that hopefully pays tribute to both my parents' art and life while also helping me understand the origins and mysteries of our homeland and family better."*

Sara Nodjoumi, co-director, *A Revolution on Canvas*

USA / 2023 / co-dir Sara Nodjoumi, Till Schauder / doc / English & Farsi with English subtitles / 95m  
UK premiere

### **[Land of My Dreams](#)**

**Sunday, 17 March, 3pm, Rich Mix**

**Followed by in-person discussion with the filmmaker, Nausheen Khan and Meenakshi Ganguly, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch**

**Film also streaming across the UK + Ireland from 18-24 March**

This film is captioned and audio-described; the discussion panel following the film will be live-captioned.

In 2019, protests broke out after the Indian government enacted the Citizenship Amendment Act, which overtly discriminates against Muslims. Nausheen Khan follows the women at the forefront of the resistance.

*"Land of My Dreams encapsulates so much that is good in India, and what is being lost. In a celebration of diversity, various communities came together to peacefully protest a patently discriminatory law. And in crushing the protest with hate, violence, and arrests, the authorities snatched from the young their right to dissent in a democracy."*

Meenakshi Ganguly, deputy Asia director, Human Rights Watch

India / 2023 / dir Nausheen Khan / doc / Hindi, English with English subtitles / 74m  
UK Premiere

### **[Coconut Head Generation](#)**

**Sunday, 17 March, 6pm, Rich Mix**

**Followed by in-person discussion with the filmmaker, Alain Kassanda, and film participant, Adebimpe Adeyemi, moderated by Kiki Mordi, an Emmy-nominated Journalist and entrepreneur**

**(via Zoom)**

**Film also streaming across the UK + Ireland from 18-24 March**

Every Thursday in the University of Ibadan, the oldest university in Nigeria, the student-run Film Club discusses films from around the world. Contrary to stereotypes of the new generation embodied in the Nigerian expression "Coconut Head Generation"—used to describe “stubborn and brainless youth”—these students transform a small lecture hall into an essential space for debate on pressing social issues from education and elections to gender and equality.

*Winner, Grand Prix, Cinéma du Réel 2023*

*Official Selection, IDFA 2023*

*“Coconut Head Generation showcases the brilliance and resilience of young Nigerians who are coming together despite individual and collective struggles to create a space for themselves and reclaim their power. Their raw and rich perspectives challenge received wisdom as they engage ideas and each other, seeking new ways to shape society for good.”*

Anietie Ewang, Africa researcher, Human Rights Watch

France/Nigeria / 2023 / dir Alain Kassanda / doc / English, Pidgin English, French, Yoruba with English subtitles / 89m

### **Inshallah a Boy**

**Monday, 18 March, 6. 15pm, Rich Mix**

**Followed by Zoom discussion with the filmmaker, Amjad Al Rasheed.**

**Film also streaming across the UK + Ireland from 18-24 March**

This gripping, sharp-witted, feminist drama - the first Jordanian feature to have an official screening at Cannes accompanies Nawal, who is forced into a series of rash situations to hold onto her family and claim what should rightfully be hers. The result is a suspenseful and engrossing portrait of resistance and strength, and a snapshot into the many forms of systemic oppression facing women in Jordanian society and its legal system.

*Official Selection, Cannes Critics' Week 2023*

*Official Selection, Toronto International Film Festival 2023*

*“Tense, gripping, and unflinchingly honest, the film sheds light on the oppression faced by women under archaic laws. By refusing to focus solely on women’s suffering, Inshallah A Boy takes a survivor-centred approach, adding a powerful angle to its narrative.”*

Negar Mohtashami, women’s rights research assistant, Human Rights Watch

Jordan, France, Saudi Arabia, Qatar / 2023 / dir Amjad Al Rasheed / drama / Arabic with English subtitles / 113m

### **Power Alley (Levante)**

**Tuesday, 19 March, 6.15pm, Rich Mix**

**Followed by Zoom discussion with the filmmaker, Lillah Halla**

**Film streaming across the UK + Ireland from 18-24 March**

A promising Brazilian volleyball player, Sofia, 17, a member of a vibrant LGBTQ+-inclusive volleyball team, is on the brink of a future-defining game she has worked tirelessly for. When she discovers her pregnancy, Sofia is forced to seek help in a country where abortion is criminalised in most circumstances. Desperate, she becomes the target of a fundamentalist group determined to stop her

at any cost. Luckily neither Sofia nor her boundlessly loving father and fiercely loyal teammates are willing to surrender to the blind fervour of the swarm.

*Winner, FIPRESCI Prize, Cannes Critics' Week 2023*

*"A compelling story that could happen to anyone in Brazil, or even in other countries, where there is no access to abortion."*

Regina Tamés, deputy women's rights director, Human Rights Watch

Brazil, France, Uruguay / 2023 / dir Lillah Halla / drama / Portuguese, Spanish with English subtitles / 99m

### **After the Fire**

**Wednesday, 20 March, 6.15pm, Barbican Cinema 2**

**Followed by in-person discussion with the filmmaker, Mehdi Fikri, and Kartik Raj, Europe & Central Asia researcher at Human Rights Watch.**

The suspicious death of Karim, killed by police during an investigation, ignites pain and passion in his Strasbourg suburb community as he becomes yet another victim in France's history of racial profiling and police violence. Malika, Karim's sister, must decide whether the battle against authorities who are determined to cover up their crime is worth the cost to her family and wellbeing. Starring Camélia Jordana (a French-Algerian pop singer) and Sofiane (a French-Algerian rapper).

*Official Selection, Toronto International Film Festival 2023*

*"Filled with palpable mourning, tension and rage, After the Fire tells the story of one family dealing with a death at the hands of the police – with a visually stunning backdrop that captures the strained police-community relations, structural racism, and socioeconomic deprivation of today's urban France."*

Kartik Raj, Europe & Central Asia researcher, Human Rights Watch

France / 2023 / dir Mehdi Fikri / drama / French with English subtitles / 96m  
UK Premiere

### **Tree of Violence**

**Thursday, 21 March, 8.30pm, Rich Mix**

**Followed by in-person discussion with the filmmaker, Anna Moiseenko, and Tanya Lokshina, associate Europe and Central Asia director at Human Rights Watch (via Zoom).**

**Film also streaming across the UK + Ireland from 18-24 March**

For over a decade, the internationally recognised Russian artist Victoria (Vika) Lomasko has exposed truths about Vladimir Putin's Russia through graphic reportage. Her ambitious new work on the long reach of state-sponsored violence—from domestic violence to the crackdown on free speech—is particularly timely. As Putin wages war against Ukraine and brands dissidents "traitors, to spit out like flies," Lomasko faces increasing safety threats and must decide if a future in Russia is possible.

***Tree of Violence*** is part of the series [Draw for Change](#) created by Vincent Coen & Guillaume Vandenberghe.

*"This stellar combination of motion picture and animation tells the story of contemporary Russia—entrenched rights abuses and violence, lawlessness and impunity, and evisceration of civil society by*



*a ruthless government—through the eyes of a brilliant graphic reporter. Tree of Violence is a work of art and a harrowing portrait of tyranny.”*

Tanya Lokshina, associate Europe and Central Asia director, Human Rights Watch

Belgium, Luxembourg / 2024 / dir Anna Moiseenko / doc / Russian with English subtitles / 81m  
UK Premiere

**Tickets on sale: Thu 8 Feb 2024. <https://ff.hrw.org/london>**

**Barbican prices:**

Adult £13

Barbican Member £10.40

Young Barbican/Barbican staff/City of London staff £5

Under 18s £6

Students/Unwaged/Over 60s £11

Relaxed screening £6; carers and companions go free.

Pay what you can: A limited number of tickets will be set aside for each in-person screening as “Pay what you can.” Offering audience members to pay the following price: £15/£13 (Suggested) / £9 / £6 / £3 (other discounts do not apply)

**Rich Mix prices:**

Monday and Wednesday

Adult: £7

Member: £6

Mixer Member (16-25 year olds): £6

Student: £7

Student Member: £7

Tuesday - Sunday

Adult: £11.90

Member: £9.90

Mixer Member (16-25 year olds): £6

Concession: £10.80

**Digital festival tickets:**

£6 / €6 – Individual ticket

£4.80 / €4.80 – Individual ticket for Barbican/HRW Members (with use of code)

£4 / €4 – Young Barbican Members / Students (with use of code)

£4.50 / €4.50 – Barbican Corporate Members (with use of code)

£45 - (standard) digital festival pass with access to all 9 films

£35 - (Barbican/ HRW Member price with use of code) Digital festival pass with access to all 9 films

**Free digital tickets:** Free online tickets are available to members of the public for whom cost of a ticket would be inaccessible, by emailing [filmticket@hrw.org](mailto:filmticket@hrw.org). (Limited free tickets available, first come first served.)

**For downloadable images and press kits, please visit:**

<https://ff.hrw.org/press-room>

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.



**For media wanting to cover the festival and request interviews, review copies, or press tickets (limited availability) contact:**

**Sarah Harvey Publicity:**

**Sarah Harvey:** [sarah@sarahharveypublicity.co.uk](mailto:sarah@sarahharveypublicity.co.uk)

**Anna Dean:** [anna@sarahharveypublicity.co.uk](mailto:anna@sarahharveypublicity.co.uk)

For festival updates, sign up for our mailing list at [hrw.org/filmconnect](http://hrw.org/filmconnect)

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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 practise 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 work. Our researchers examine situations in about 100 countries around the world. They function as investigators, reporters, 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.

### **About the Barbican**

The Barbican is a catalyst for creativity, sparking possibilities for artists, audiences, and communities. We showcase the most exciting art from around the world, pushing traditional artistic boundaries to entertain and inspire millions of people, create connections, provoke debate, and reflect the world we live in.

We are an international arts and events centre rooted firmly in our own neighbourhood, collaborating with local communities and putting the City of London on the map as a destination for everybody. Central to our purpose is supporting emerging talent and shaping opportunities that will accelerate the next generation of creatives.

As a not-for-profit, we rely on the generosity of individuals and organisations, including our principal funder, the City of London Corporation. Every ticket purchased, donation made, and pound earned supports our arts and learning programme and enables the widest possible range of people to experience the joy of the arts.

Opened in 1982, the Barbican is a unique and audacious building, recognised globally as an architectural icon. As well as our theatres, galleries, concert halls and cinemas, we have a large conservatory with over 1,500 species of plants and trees, a library, conference facilities, public and community spaces, restaurants, bars, and a picturesque lakeside oasis.

We are the home of the London Symphony Orchestra, and a London base of the Royal Shakespeare Company. We regularly co-commission, produce and showcase the work of our other partners and associates: the Academy of Ancient Music, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Boy Blue, Britten Sinfonia, Cheek by Jowl, Drum Works, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Serious and We Are Parable.

For more information, visit our [or](#) connect with us on [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Spotify](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

### **About Barbican Cinema**

We connect audiences with a curated programme of international cinema; from celebrated filmmakers to ground-breaking and under-heard voices from past and present. Our programme ranges from thematic seasons that respond to today's world, to new releases, ScreenTalks, cross-artform collaborations, family events, access screenings and event cinema that presents the performing arts on screen.

[barbican.org.uk/whats-on/cinema](http://barbican.org.uk/whats-on/cinema)

### **About Rich Mix**

Rich Mix welcomes the communities of the world in East London to create, enjoy and share culture. Open since 2006, they are a charity connecting some of the city's most adventurous and diverse audiences to a vital, exciting and ambitious programme of contemporary culture.

Rooted in the city but open to the world, Rich Mix champions diversity in everything they do. Their programme covers every genre imaginable – from live music, spoken word, theatre, dance, talks and

visual art in the performance and exhibition spaces to independent films, festivals and blockbusters across their three-screen cinema.

Through a range of creative engagement programmes, Rich Mix also develops and facilitates the creative potential of young people, families, children and wide-ranging communities across East London.

[richmix.org.uk](http://richmix.org.uk)

### **About People's Postcode Lottery**

The Postcode Lottery format was created by Novamedia to provide a source of long-term, unrestricted funds for charities and good causes. Millions of players make all this possible. Players of People's Postcode Lottery have raised more than 1.2 billion pounds for thousands of charities and local good causes to date. At least 33% of each ticket goes towards good causes and charities. People's Postcode Lottery, operating in England, Scotland and Wales, is part of an international family of lotteries also known as Novamedia / Postcode Lottery Group. Sister lotteries operate in the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, and Norway.