



PETITION: Free Filmmaker Behrouz Ghobadi

On November 4, 2012, Iranian film director Behrouz Ghobadi was arrested by plainclothes forces in Iran. Since then, he has had no contact with his family and has not been able to see an attorney. His family has searched several prisons and asked the Iranian judiciary for information, but no one will tell them where or the conditions in which he is being held.

In a recent statement, exiled Iranian director Bahman Ghobadi expressed deep concern about his younger brother's health, explaining that Behrouz has platinum pins in both of his legs from a car accident and requires care and medication for his gout, a weak heart, and respiratory problems.

The Ghobadi family has heard that Behrouz is accused of acting against national security, but they are certain he is innocent of such crimes because he is not involved in political or opposition activities.

Behrouz has directed three short films, "That Man," "Hunt," and "Those Two People." He also served as a production manager in five of Bahman's films, two of which are banned in Iran. His most recent work was as executive producer in his brother's latest movie, "Rhino Season," which made its Turkey debut one week before Behrouz's arrest.

Unable to financially support himself in Iran, Behrouz moved to Kurdistan, Iraq, last year to run a shampoo and soap shop. He is the sole provider for his wife and one-month old son, and he was taking care of his elderly mother. They are extremely worried about his well-being.

We the undersigned stand in solidarity with our fellow filmmaker and condemn his imprisonment. We call on Iran's government to guarantee Behrouz Ghobadi's safety and to release information about his whereabouts and detention. We also strongly urge Iranian authorities to free him immediately and without condition.

Behrouz is the latest filmmaker who has been detained in Iran. Jafar Panahi, who was awarded the European Union's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in October, faces a six-year prison sentence. And in 2011, directors Mohammad Rasoulof, Naser Saffarian, Hadi Afarideh, Mojtaba Mirtahmasb, and Shahnam Bazdar were held behind bars. It is our hope that Iran's filmmakers be celebrated, not imprisoned.

Signed:

Martin Scorsese, director
Paul Haggis, director

Richard Raymond, director
Guillermo Arriaga, director
Bahman Ghobadi, director
Nazanin Boniadi, actress
James Franco, actor
Liam Neeson, actor
Behrouz Vossoughi, actor
Rainn Wilson, actor
Freida Pinto, actress
Adrien Brody, actor
Mila Kunis, actress
Shirin Neshat, director
Cameron Bailey, artistic director, Toronto International Film Festival
Piers Handling, director & chief executive officer, Toronto International Film Festival
Raffaele Petrini, executive director of Petrini Films
Adeline Fontan Tessaur, director of Elle Driver
Tim Beddows, managing director, Network Distributing Limited
Ailsa Ferrier, Curzon Artificial Eye Film Distribution
Mika Siltala, Cinema Mondo Film Distribution, Finland
Frank L. Stavik, managing director, AS Fidalgo Film distribution
Jean Labadie, Le pacte film distribution
Bea Cuttat, Look Now! film distribution, Switzerland
Alex Hamilton, director of film, Entertainment One
Jakub Duszynski, Gutek Film
Emre Akpınar, president of Kurmaca Film
Kamran Sardar Khan, head of distribution and acquisitions, Camino Film
Andrew Mackie, Transmission Films, Australia
Bruno Parent, Cineart, Belgium
Kelly Green, KGFilmLink Inc.
Felix Hächler, Filmcoopi Zürich AG
Pedro Borges, film distributor and producer, Midas Filmes
James Hewison, film consultant, Australia
Rob Williams, vice president, Indomina Media, Inc.
David Chelminsky, Cine Video y TV SA de CV, Mexico
Hilel Chelminsky Polak, Cine Video y TV SA de CV, Mexico
Andrew Mackie, Transmission Films, Australia
Beat Käslin, director, Arthouse Comercio Movie AG, Switzerland
Anne-Claire Villeneuve, acquisitions manager, Films Séville Inc.,
Christine Eloy, Cineart
Marie Therese Guirgis, producer
Jeff Klein, president, Jaguar Distribution Corp.
Berangere Cortier, marketing/distribution, Cineart
Jamsheed Akrami, film professor
Roxana Saberi, screenwriter and journalist
Ellen Harrington, Director of Exhibitions and Special Events, The Academy of Motion
Picture Arts and Sciences

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