

# 'Iliya, Search of Hero' director calls film 'most anti-Israeli' in children's genre

## Arts & Culture Desk

The director of the Iranian film 'Iliya, Search of Hero' described it as the "most anti-Israeli" film in the children's genre.

The film features four characters from four different parts of the world—Arash from Iran, Habib from Palestine, Jin from China, and Louis from France—whose paths cross in an international incident.

In an interview with IRNA, director Ali Mousavinejad said that he has always been passionate about creating heroes for Iranian children and teens, expressing dismay at their admiration for "false heroes."

The film simulates the conquest of the Fortress of Khaybar by Imam Ali, the first Imam of Shia Muslims, in the form of a video game. It tells the story of a young gamer named Arash, who enters a mysterious online game. Arash's family tries to protect him from the game's dangers, but a greater conspiracy looms.

Mousavinejad explained that the story of the conquest of Khaybar is an epic that can greatly contribute to young audiences' understanding of the character and virtues of Imam Ali. "For years, I wanted to narrate this story in a non-Arab setting in an appealing way for children," he said. The final narrative, which blends live-action and animation techniques, presents the historical event as if the children are listening to a class on early Islamic history.

The director lamented the increasing attacks on religious beliefs in Iran and criticized various institutions for their weak response.

He emphasized that children and adolescents lack the agency to demand their rights and are often overlooked.

On the genre of the film, Mousavinejad clarified that it is primarily an adventure-mystery blend, contrary to assumptions that it falls under fantasy. He asserted that the events and char-



acters in the film are grounded in logic, without any fantastical or superhuman elements.

Regarding the character design, the initial plan was to make the film fully animated. However, after changes to the screenplay, the designs were restarted,

leading to a different artistic direction.

Mousavinejad, himself a parent of two teenagers, shared his interest in video games and noted the significant number of gamers in Iran, estimated at around 40 million by the coun-

try's Computer and Video Games Foundation. He deliberately crafted a narrative world that would appeal to young gamers.

The director also addressed the challenges of producing children's films and animations in Iran, which have led to limita-

tions in this field.

He attributed the lack of consistent and sustained support from institutions as a key factor, along with the reluctance of producers to take on financial risks for such projects, especially those involving animation.

## Iranian short film 'Inadmissible' honored at US festival



The Iranian short film 'Inadmissible,' written and directed by Soroush Yari, has received an Award of Merit at the 8th Artists Forum Festival of Independent Films (VAIFF) in

Chicago. The festival aims to showcase and support emerging and professional talent in the film industry. It offers a cash prize to the best film as selected by a jury of industry profes-

sionals.

'Inadmissible' tells the story of Afghan immigrants in Iran and stars Samir Heyran, Taha Razavi, Ali Hosseini, and Shahrooz Aghaei.

**Mohammad Ali Rajabi**  
Cartoonist



## Iranian short film 'Sheep' heads to Brazil

The Iranian short film 'Sheep: Two-legged Animal' continues its global journey and will be screened at the 35th Sao Paulo International Short Film Festival in Brazil.

The film, directed by Mehrdad Kabiri, has been selected to compete in the festival's international competition, Mehr News Agency reported.

'Sheep' tells the story of a student named Amir, who faces humiliation at school due to his circumstances, leading to a transformation within him. The film stars

Maziar Seyedi, Yazdan Kokabi Saba, Shahrooz Aghaeipour, and Mohsen Bani Hashem.

The Sao Paulo International Short Film Festival is one of the most important and largest events in the world, aiming to promote greater exchange between Latin American and international productions.

The festival will take place from August 22 to September 1, showcasing films that contribute to the development of short films in terms of aesthetics, unique forms, and production methods.



## Health officials warn of measles outbreak in Iraq ahead of Arbaeen

### Social Desk

Iranian health authorities warned of a measles outbreak in Iraq and advised pilgrims traveling to the country for the upcoming Arbaeen ceremony to ensure their children under 15 are fully vaccinated against the disease.

Hossein Farshidi, Deputy Health Minister, said measles is a viral disease that primarily affects children, but adults without a history of vaccination or prior infection are also at risk, ISNA wrote.

The incubation period for measles ranges from 7 to 21

days, and the disease manifests as fever, respiratory symptoms, and reddish skin rashes that start on the face and spread to the limbs. The disease is contagious through respiratory droplets from four days before to four days after

the appearance of the rash. Emphasizing the high contagiousness of measles, Farshidi stated that timely vaccination is the most effective way to prevent the disease. Unfortunately, he noted that vaccination coverage



in neighboring countries, including Iraq, has been inadequate to control measles, leading to outbreaks in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq. According to the World Health Organization's data, Iraq has been experiencing a large measles epidemic since last year, with a significant increase in cases in recent months. The number of measles cases in 2023 was 9,651, but it has surged to 28,783 in the first six months of 2024. Farshidi advised Iranians planning to travel to Iraq to ensure their children under 15 are fully vaccinated against measles by visiting health centers with their children's vaccination cards and completing the vaccination if necessary.