

# Iran's 'Cold Sigh' sweeps top honors at Richmond film festival

## Arts & Culture Desk

The Iranian film 'Cold Sigh', helmed by director Nahid Sedigh, emerged as a triple winner at the 13th edition of the Richmond International Film Festival in Richmond, Virginia. The festival, which ran from September 24 to 29, awarded 'Cold Sigh' the Best Drama, Best Director, and Best Cinematography awards, capping off a successful year for the film, Mehr News Agency reported. 'Cold Sigh' has been making waves on the international film circuit, having already screened at several festivals, including the Santa Barbara Inter-

national Film Festival in the United States, the 46th Moscow International Film Festival, and the Fajr International Film Festival in Iran. The film has picked up several awards along the way, including Best Director Award, the Audience Choice Award for the Best Film, and the NETPAC (Network for the Promotion of Asia Pacific Cinema) Special Mention at the Moscow festival. The drama, which tells the story of a young man seeking revenge against his father for a decades-old tragedy, has resonated with audiences and critics alike. The film's cast, including Iman Sedigh, Ali Bagheri,

Mohammad Ashkanfar, Salar Derakhshandeh, Kourosh Eshraghi, Hossein Rezaian, Ahura Bahrami, and Borhan Bahrami, deliver powerful performances that have been widely praised. The Richmond International Film Festival, which showcases films from around the world, featured 175 official selections from over 25 countries this year, as well as 30 live music performances throughout the week. The festival's organizers said they were thrilled to have 'Cold Sigh' as part of their lineup, and praised the film's thought-provoking themes and stunning cinematography.



## Iranian film 'Sculpture' wins two awards at Chicago festival

Iranian filmmaker Ramin Hosseinpour was awarded at the Crown Point International Film Festival (CPIFF) in Chicago, winning the award for Best Director of a Short Film for his documentary 'Sculpture.' Hosseinpour, who also wrote and produced the film, picked up the

award at the 45th edition of the festival, which was held in September 2024. The film's editor, Ehsan Vaseghi, also won the award for Best Editing, Mehr News Agency reported. The CPIFF, which has been running for 45 years, will showcase the winning films on screens in Chicago for a week and present the winners with a cash prize and a trophy at its annual awards ceremony, to be held in three months. 'Sculpture' is a documentary short film based on the true story of the lives of Rumi and Shams. The film is currently competing to qualify for the Academy Awards in the United States and Canada, as well as the BAFTAs. It has also been ranked among the top 50 short films and documentaries on IMDb. Hosseinpour, who combines cinema, architecture, and music in his work, has won several international awards in the past.



## US doctors say they 'witnessed crimes beyond comprehension' in Gaza

A group of 99 American healthcare providers who have volunteered in the Gaza Strip over the past year sent President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris a letter detailing "the massive human toll from Israel's attack" and urging the administration to "end this madness now!" In the letter, they shared their firsthand experiences of the dire humanitarian conditions amid Israel's ongoing offensive, saying they had "witnessed crimes beyond comprehension." Anadolu Agency reported. "We wish to be absolutely clear: Not once did any of us see any type of Palestinian militant activity in any of Gaza's hospitals or other health care facilities," they said in the letter, which was published on the website "Gaza Healthcare Letters." "We urge you to see that Israel has systematically and deliberately devastated Gaza's entire health care system and that Israel has targeted our colleagues in Gaza for torture, disappearance, and

murder," they added. "Every day I saw babies die. They had been born healthy. Their mothers were so malnourished that they could not breastfeed, and we lacked formula or clean water to feed them, so they starved," said Asma Taha, a pediatric nurse practitioner, as quoted in the letter. "Gaza was the first time I held a baby's brains in my hand. The first of many," Dr. Mark Perlmutter, an orthopedic and hand surgeon, said in the letter. Doctors said in the letter that Israel's "continued, repeated" displacement of the malnourished and sick population of Gaza, half of whom are children, to areas without running water or even toilets available is "absolutely shocking." The group demanded that the Biden administration support an international arms embargo on both Israel and Palestinian groups until a permanent cease-fire is reached and both Israeli and Palestinian hostages are released. The signatories also asked for a meeting

with Biden and Harris to discuss what they saw and why they feel American policy in the Middle East "must change immediately." "Every day that we continue supplying weapons and munitions to Israel is another day that women are shredded by our bombs and children are murdered with our bullets," they said.



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## Operation True Promise II; crushing blow to West, Zionist regime

### PERSPECTIVE

In the wake of the recent missile strike by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) against occupied territories, the scale of the blow dealt to the Zionist regime and its Western allies cannot be understated. The operation, known as True Promise II, marked a pivotal moment in both military strategy and geopolitical calculus, delivering a multifaceted message to the global community. Unlike previous actions, True Promise II demonstrated both restraint and precision, with Iran targeting key military and security installations deep within occupied territories. Jafar Ghanabashi, an expert on West Asia, emphasized in a recent interview that the missiles used in this operation were vastly different from those used in past strikes. With greater destructive power and extended range, this operation signals a new chapter in Iran's military capabilities. But the importance of True Promise II transcends military achievements. As Ghanabashi notes, the operation was

conducted with remarkable rationality and careful consideration of all political, social, and military aspects. Despite the high stakes, Iran refrained from impulsive actions, opting instead for calculated strikes against specific Israeli targets, including intelligence units like Mossad and the Israeli military. This deliberate approach reveals a level of strategic maturity that sets Iran apart from its adversaries. Moreover, Iran's leadership sent a clear message: They possess the capability to strike any region within occupied territories and, if necessary, cripple Israel's economy or depopulate its cities. Yet, their decision to limit the scope of the operation underscores a policy of restraint, showcasing a significant degree of self-control and an avoidance of unnecessary escalation.

### Clear legitimacy

In terms of legitimacy, the international community has little ground to challenge Iran's right to respond. Over the years, Israel has carried out numerous acts of aggression, targeting Iranian scientists,

military advisors in Syria and Lebanon, and even violating Iranian sovereignty. As Ghanabashi points out, international law—particularly the UN Charter—grants every nation the right to defend itself when attacked. Iran's operation, therefore, stands on firm legal and moral ground, despite the silence of global institutions in the face of Israeli atrocities.

### Failure of Israel's multilayered defense

Perhaps most striking is the failure of Israel's much-touted multilayered air defense system, a defeat that extends beyond the borders of the Zionist state. The West, especially the United States, which has long been Israel's primary military supplier and defender, found itself unable to shield its closest ally from the missile barrage. This failure is not just a military embarrassment for Israel but also a devastating blow to the credibility of Western military technology and defense strategies. As Ghanabashi argues, this failure will have far-reaching consequences for West-

ern arms manufacturers. The inability of these defense systems to intercept Iranian missiles exposes a critical vulnerability, one that will likely lead to a decline in demand for both defensive and offensive weapons systems. The growing efficacy of missile technology, which bypasses expensive and complex air defense systems, could lead to a reduction in the sale of fighter jets and other traditional military equipment. In short, True Promise II has triggered a seismic shift, not just in the military landscape of the Middle East, but also in the global arms market. Operation True Promise II represents a strategic and psychological defeat for both the Zionist regime and its Western backers. It exposes the limits of Western military power, the vulnerability of Israel, and the profound imbalance in the region's military capabilities. The operation sends a message that Iran is both capable and willing to act decisively, yet chooses to do so with restraint and wisdom—an approach that sets it apart in an increasingly volatile geopolitical environment.