



18th Cinéma Vérité kicks off With focus on bold, pro-Palestinian storytelling

Arts & Culture Desk

The 18th edition of the Iran International Documentary Film Festival, Cinéma Vérité, began, December 8, 2024, at Tehran's Charsu Cineplex. The festival aims to spotlight a new generation of documentary filmmakers, as stated by its secretary, Mohammad Hamidi-Moghadam, during the opening ceremony. Hamidi-Moghadam emphasized the festival's commitment to bold and demanding storytelling, asserting, "Cinéma Vérité has always been a seeker and a brave platform, never aiming for neutral documentary cinema." In a poignant tribute, he dedicated the festival to the people of Gaza, who have

faced relentless attacks for over a year. "We are starting this 18th edition with a film about these people, and I see ourselves alongside them," he remarked. He elaborated on the festival's role as an observer in a chaotic world, highlighting that it would showcase films reflecting the complex realities faced by people globally. This year's festival will run through December 15, Irandocfest.ir. Hamidi-Moghadam reiterated the festival's mission, stating, "We have not pursued neutral documentary cinema and have valued young filmmakers, resulting in the birth of a fresh generation whose works you will witness in this edition." He also acknowledged the contribu-

tions of veteran filmmakers, expressing gratitude for their enduring influence on Iranian documentary cinema. He assured attendees that the national section of this year's festival would present straightforward narratives. "We trust filmmakers to provide fair critiques. The works in this edition strive to shed light on our world," he added, expressing appreciation for the documentarians who have kept the spirit of this cinema alive. One of the festival's primary objectives is to draw attention from policymakers towards the significance of documentary filmmaking. In a message conveyed to the festival, Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Abbas Salehi, praised Cinéma Vérité as a unique opportunity to

showcase diverse perspectives and narratives from documentary filmmakers. He noted, "Documentary cinema serves as a medium for presenting the truth and reflecting the world directly, playing an unparalleled role in enhancing our understanding of culture, history, and society." Salehi highlighted that the festival provides a platform for voices that often get lost in daily life, encouraging society to reflect on pressing domestic and international issues. "Cinéma Vérité symbolizes the valuable efforts of Iranian filmmakers in the documentary arena, acting as a bridge between audiences and the complex world we inhabit," he commented. He lauded the creativity, commitment,

and awareness of the documentary filmmakers participating in this year's festival, asserting that their works open new windows to the real world.



Tehran event blasts Israel's 'sheer savagery' toward children in Gaza, Lebanon

The Iranian capital has hosted an international artistic event held in support of children in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, who have been hit by more than a year of markedly intensified and deadly Israeli aggression, denouncing the regime's "sheer savagery" toward the minors. Titled 'We Do Not End,' the event went underway in Tehran on Monday, with senior officials, other personalities and experts in attendance, Press TV reported. The event was held in cooperation with more than a dozen people-based organizations, the national network of non-governmental humanitarian bodies, and Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young

Adults. Addressing the occasion, Gholam-Hossein Darzi, director-general of the Foreign Ministry's Sustained Development and Environmental Department, noted that tens of thousands of people had been killed as a result of the Israeli regime's 14-month-old genocidal war on Gaza and escalation against Lebanon. He said that women and children comprised "more than 70 percent" of the fatalities. Darzi considered the Israeli atrocities that have been taking place in full view of members of the international community to be perfect examples of "genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity." The sheer extent of the casualties and destruction caused by the genocide in Gaza "serves as a clear indicator of a calculated conspiracy aimed at bringing about the destruction of a nation through causing its forced displacement from Palestine," the official said. "Besides amounting to an affront to humanity, the volume of savagery serves as complete disregard for [various] values, norms, civilizations, and the foundational principles of the international law, especially the humanitarian international law."



Severe water shortages in Tehran as rainfall plummets by 23%

Social Desk

As Iran faces a significant reduction in rainfall, with a noted 23% drop nationwide and only 20% capacity in Tehran's reservoirs, officials are urging immediate water management reforms to avert further crises. In a stark warning about the state of water resources in Iran, Isa Bozorgzadeh, spokesperson for the Water Industry, announced that rainfall has decreased by approximately 23% since the current water year began on September 22, 2023. He emphasized that Tehran's reservoirs are only 20% full, with the capital receiving just 48 millimeters of precipitation so far, falling short of the normal 58 millimeters by 17%. During a televised report, Bozorgzadeh stated, "We are experiencing a dry autumn," and emphasized that the current national rainfall stands at about 35 millimeters, which is significantly lower than typical averages for this time of year. He further explained that Iran's average water resources are about one-third of the global average, which presents unique challenges for the

country, particularly in urban areas like Tehran that also depend on surrounding regions for their water supply. The spokesperson provided a broader overview of the national water situation, noting that this year's reservoirs have received 3.70 billion cubic meters of water, a 2% decrease from the same period last year. He pointed out that the total water volume in the country's reservoirs currently stands at 22.66 billion cubic meters, reflecting a 12% improvement compared to last year's figures. In Tehran specifically, the five main reservoirs collectively hold around 373 million cubic meters of water, with individual capacities reported as follows: The Amir Kabir Dam holds 63 million cubic meters (35% full), the Latiyan Dam holds 25 million cubic meters (34% full), the Lar Dam has 24 million cubic meters (3% full), the Taleqan Dam contains 239 million cubic meters (54% full), and the Mamlou Dam has 34 million cubic meters (14% full). Bozorgzadeh stressed the urgent need for improved water consumption management, stating, "We are

facing a water crisis in Tehran... If we do not manage our consumption, we could harm public welfare." He reiterated the importance of reducing groundwater extraction to prevent further degradation of water sources, warning that unchecked usage could lead to increased desertification and land subsidence. In alignment with these challenges, Bozorgzadeh outlined the Ministry of Energy's plans to reform water governance through institutional changes and enhanced community participation. He stated, "We must reduce the role of government in water management," advocating for a shift towards empowering local water organizations and the private sector. Moreover, Mohsen Ardakani, managing director of Tehran Water and Wastewater Company, echoed these concerns at a conference evaluating the performance of water-related companies in the region. He noted the unprecedented drought conditions over the past five years and highlighted the importance of collaborative efforts among staff to navigate the ongoing water crisis.

Opportunities lie hidden...

Regarding the international and regional situation arising from these developments, Iran is closely monitoring the conditions and changes taking place in Syria. Based on how the situation evolves, Iran will act in the interest of the people, the system, and the country. Iran will continue on its path based on its fundamental principles and strategies, which it

has consistently articulated and adhered to. Similar events have occurred in the past, and this situation will also pass soon. However, Iran assures that no aspect of these developments can pose a threat to Iran. When we review Iran's previous experiences over the past 45 years since the victory of the Islamic Revolution and examine events similar to the recent changes in Syria, we find that

Iran has consistently made the best decisions and continued on the most favorable path. Our national hero, General Qasem Soleimani, famously stated, "Sometimes, within threats lie opportunities that do not exist within opportunities themselves." Therefore, be assured that in the developments that have occurred in Syria, Iran will make the best decisions. If some enemies believe that the current situation in

Syria poses a threat to Iran and may cause harm, they are mistaken; they are far too small to be considered a threat to us. Our enemies have experienced Iran's strength during the eight years of the Sacred Defense (1980-1988), and they have tested Iran's heroes and defenders in various arenas. They have realized that when Iran's name and its interests and security are at stake, Iranians stand firm with

all their might. Hence, I emphasize that Iran's power will neutralize any threat, and the dignity and pride of Iranians will not allow any movement from enemies that could inflict even the slightest harm to the people and the country. During the eight-year war, it was universally acknowledged that the entire world, including Western and European countries, supported Saddam's re-

gime, while Iran relied solely on its brave and valiant youths. Despite having minimal military resources, we achieved a significant victory. Today, however, the situation is entirely different, and Iran possesses the most advanced military equipment. We have substantial experience in defensive technologies and military training, and day by day, Iran's dignity and power will continue to grow.