



Iran celebrates cultural resilience, national unity through arts after Israeli aggression

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Abbas Salehi, said Tuesday that the country remains in a "perpetual state of historical readiness," during a ceremony in Tehran commemorating those in culture and media whose legacy inspired unity during the recent Israeli imposed war. The event, titled 'Forever Iran,' was held at Vahdat Hall and brought together senior officials, prominent artists, and the families of the deceased, IRNA reported. President Masoud Pezeshkian was also in attendance, stressing the government's public commitment to cultural resilience. The program paid tribute to the lives and legacies of artists, musicians, writers, and media workers who, in Salehi's words, "stood their ground in the face of adversity and remained the voice of the nation." The ceremony served not only as a memorial but as a wider assertion of Iran's identity as a civilization deeply rooted in spiritual heritage, literary ex-

pression, and collective memory. "Iran is not merely a name on a map," Salehi said. "It is a historic crossroads, a corridor through which the world's oldest civilizations have passed—and it is never caught off guard." He described Iran's past as a mix of "heroic sagas and mystical traditions," which together have shaped what he called a "remarkable cultural synthesis." Salehi said foreign powers had misjudged the nation's response during the recent war. "They thought the people would fold. But our story is not written in dust. It cannot be chopped down with a single axe," he said, invoking Iran's endurance in the face of repeated invasions throughout history. According to polling referenced by the minister, 83 percent of Iranians in 2023 expressed high or very high pride in their national identity. "That sense of belonging is not accidental," he said. "It's carved from centuries of shared history, from poems and songs, from resistance and renewal."



Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi speaks during a ceremony titled 'Forever Iran' in Tehran on July 22, 2025.

● IRNA

Speaking on the sidelines of the ceremony, Deputy Culture Minister Naderah Rezaei praised what she described as the "envy-inducing" solidarity shown by artists during the war. "From the very first hours, artists responded on their own initiative," she said. "Whether online or on the streets, they kept the spirit of the people alive—through music, performance, and visual art." She noted that artists inside and outside Iran created works spontaneously, driven by what she called a "deep concern for Iran." Rezaei added that the ministry's arts division, in collaboration with the Cinema Organization of Iran, intends to support future productions focused on the 12-day war, saying that "there is still much to document and convey." She emphasized the importance of



completing the narrative through films and cultural storytelling, to honor what the nation endured and the "great talents it lost." 'Forever Iran' also recognized the sacrifices made by the families of martyred artists, journalists, and cultural workers. Organizers described the

event as a "gesture of national gratitude," aimed at reinforcing the role of the arts in maintaining collective resilience. "Our cultural memory is long," Salehi concluded. "And those who give their lives to keep it alive will forever remain part of that living memory."

Iranian director Naderi honored at Armenia's Golden Apricot Film Festival



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Three celebrated works by Iranian filmmaker Amir Naderi were screened at the 22nd Golden Apricot Yerevan International Film Festival in Armenia, which wrapped up on July 20, organizers said. According to the Institute for the

Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, Naderi's classics 'The Runner,' 'Harmonica,' and 'Waiting' were shown on July 14, 16, and 18, respectively, at the Red Hall of Moscow Cinema, IRNA reported. The screenings attracted large audiences and marked a significant

return of the director's early cinematic achievements to the regional spotlight. This year's edition of the festival, held from July 13 to 20 in the Armenian capital, also featured Naderi in a leading role off-screen—as the head of the Regional Panorama competition jury. During the closing ceremony, he was awarded the Parajanov Award for Lifetime Achievement, honoring what the festival called his "outstanding contribution" to world cinema. The festival, named after the symbolic Armenian fruit, is a prominent platform for showcasing regional and international cinema. It has become known for fostering cultural dialogue and promoting artistic excellence across borders.

Iran's 'They Loved Me' to compete at Shimla festival in India

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Iranian feature 'They Loved Me,' directed by Mohammad Reza Rahmani, was officially selected for the competition section of the 11th International Film Festival of Shimla, set to take place from September 5 to 7, in the Indian city of Shimla, the capital of Himachal Pradesh. This is the second international screening of the film this year following its inclusion in Portugal's Avanca Film Festival. The Shimla event is recognized as one of India's distinct cultural showcases, supported by the Himalayan Velocity Tourism Organization and the Himachal Pradesh Department of Language and Culture. The festival highlights independent and culturally rooted cinema across fiction, documentary, short, and animated formats, ILNA reported. 'They Loved Me' features an ensemble cast including Amirhossein Arman, Amir



Jafari, Shahram Qaedi, Nasim Adabi, Ali Salehi, Hadi Taslimi, Iraj Rahmani, Leila Boloukat, and several emerging talents such as Mahsa Esmaeili, Sina Ghaffari, and Shilan Madani. Executive producer and financier Iraj Rahmani backed the film's production, while international distribution is being handled by Minerva Film, led by Elaheh Goodarzi.

Trump pulls US out of UNESCO for second time

President Donald Trump pulled the United States out of the UN culture and education agency UNESCO on Tuesday, repeating a move he had already ordered during his first term, which had been reversed under Joe Biden. The withdrawal from the Paris-based agency, which was founded after World War Two to promote peace through international cooperation in education, science, and culture, will take effect on December 31, 2026, Reuters reported. "President Trump has decided to withdraw the United States from UNESCO – which supports woke, divisive cultural and social causes that are totally out-of-step with the commonsense policies that Americans voted for in November," White House spokeswoman Anna Kelly said.

The State Department said remaining in UNESCO was not in the national interest, accusing it of having "a globalist, ideological agenda for international development at odds with our America First foreign policy". UNESCO chief Audrey Azoulay said she deeply regretted Trump's decision, but that it was "expected, and UNESCO has prepared for it". President Emanuel Macron wrote on X: "Unwavering support for UNESCO, universal protector of science, the ocean, education, culture, and world heritage." "The withdrawal of the United States will not weaken our commitment to those who are fighting this battle." The agency had diversified its sources of funding, receiving



only about 8% of its budget from Washington, she said. UNESCO was one of several international bodies Trump withdrew from during his first term, along with the World Health Organization, the Paris Agreement global climate change accord and the UN Human Rights

Council. During his second term, he has largely reinstated those steps. UNESCO officials said the US withdrawal would have some limited impact on programs the United States was financing. Israel welcomed the US decision to quit UNESCO.

The US State Department said one of the reasons for the withdrawal was UNESCO's decision to admit Palestine as a member state, which was "contrary to US policy and contributed to the proliferation of anti-Israel rhetoric within the organization." UNESCO officials said all relevant agency statements had been agreed with both Israel and the Palestinians over the past eight years. "The reasons put forward by the United States to withdraw from the organization are the same as seven years ago even though the situation has changed profoundly, political tensions have receded, and UNESCO today constitutes a rare forum for consensus on concrete and action-oriented multilateralism," Azoulay said. Diplomats said it was felt at UN-

ESCO that the withdrawal was inevitable for political reasons, given that Biden had brought the US back and had promised to repay arrears from the first time Trump pulled out. UNESCO, whose full name is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, is best known for designating World Heritage Sites, including the Grand Canyon in the United States and the ancient city of Palmyra in Syria. The United States initially joined UNESCO at its founding in 1945 but withdrew for the first time in 1984 in protest against alleged financial mismanagement and perceived anti-US bias, returning in 2003 under President George W. Bush, who said the agency had undertaken needed reforms.