



# ‘Confusion’ awarded at Georgia theater festival

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian director Mohammad Amin Sadi’s ‘Confusion’ was awarded an honorary diploma on July 31 at the Regional International Theater Festival in the Georgian port city of Poti. The Tehran-based production, staged by Amitis Theater Group, was among 11 entries from France, Romania, Lithuania, Georgia and Iran, according to ISNA.

Festival officials praised the piece for its “coherent” structure and “high-quality” execution. The play is a free adaptation of ‘L’Étourdissement,’ a novel by French writer Joël Egloff, translated into Persian by Asghar Nouri. It has been reimagined through a postmodern lens and delivered in what the director described as a “cross-genre language.”

Set in an unnamed industrial town, ‘Confusion’ follows a 23-year-old man battling internal pressures on his daily commute between home and the

slaughterhouse where he works. The story is told from the character’s point of view as he lives with his grandmother. According to Sadi, the work explores “loneliness, despair and psychological pressure” that weigh on the modern individual.

The production combines physical performance and shadow theater. Lead actor Fardin Rahmanpour was cast for his ability to handle both intense physicality and psychologically layered roles. Sahar Ghassemi plays in both form and shadow sequences. Sadi said the role took nearly five months of rehearsals to refine, while additional performers trained for more than two months. The entire staging process took about seven months to complete.

After logging more than 70 performances in Tehran, ‘Confusion’ was nominated at the Fajr International Theater Festival for best directing, acting, costume, and makeup design. The production team credited its



success in Georgia to logistical support from Albert Beigiani and Saman Khalilian, along with backing from Iran’s General Directorate of Performing Arts.

The performance is currently running at Tehran’s Hamoon Theater, which Sadi selected for its “professional audience and quality programming.” The director said the team has received offers to tour the show in cities includ-

ing Tabriz, Isfahan, Shiraz and Qeshm. Sadi is now working on a new project based on ‘Frankenstein,’ aiming to blend classical narrative with modern themes. The script is in early development, with no performance dates confirmed. As for ‘Confusion,’ he said the play is “well-suited” for both domestic and international festivals, and the group plans to submit it to this year’s Fajr festival if conditions allow.



## Iranian passion play moves Brussels audience with tale of Karbala



## Arts & Culture Desk

An Iranian troupe performed the traditional Shia passion play of Ta’zieh in Brussels, drawing a mixed crowd of European spectators and Shia residents. The Brussels performance marked the third European stop this summer for the “Imam-e-Raouf” ensemble, following shows in Sweden and Norway, according to Iranian state-backed Mehr News Agency.

The group, led by producer Mo-

hammad Javaheri and featuring artists including Hassan Gol-Khatami and Mojtaba Hassanbeigi, aims to bring the centuries-old ritual drama of Ashura to a wider global audience.

Rooted in the story of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein in 680 AD, Ta’zieh blends poetry, music, and costume to recount themes of justice, sacrifice, and resistance. The performance’s “universal message” and visual resemblance to both Greek tragedy and medieval European religious plays have

helped it resonate with Western audiences, organizers said.

UNESCO recognized Ta’zieh as intangible cultural heritage in 2010, boosting international exposure. Since then, the Imam-e-Raouf troupe has staged performances in countries across Europe, including Spain, Denmark, and Hungary, especially during the Shia mourning months of Muharram and Safar.

“This is not just a religious ceremony,” said one of the perform-

ers. “It’s a human story of oppression and courage.” Audience members—many with no prior exposure to Shia rituals—reportedly reacted with tears and silence, as the dramatic reenactment unfolded.

The group plans upcoming performances in Paris and Frankfurt, continuing its European tour. The strong turnout in Brussels, including non-Iranian viewers, suggests the cross-cultural pull of a tradition once confined to village squares and shrines in Iran.

## Iran eyes deeper film ties with Africa

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran is seeking to expand its film industry’s reach across Africa through joint productions, festival collaborations and cultural exchange, officials and academics said at a Tehran panel hosted by the Cinema Organization of Iran.

The event, held by the Center for Cinematic Studies, drew cinema officials, experts and artists to explore how Tehran could tap into what one speaker called the “vast, underutilized potential” of African film markets.

Amir Bahram Arab Ahmadi, associate professor at the University of Tehran, said Africa, home to a quarter of the world’s countries, is fast becoming a strategic cultural and economic frontier.

Arab Ahmadi highlighted Africa’s cinematic diversity, pointing to Egypt’s century-old film industry and South Africa’s post-apartheid cinema revival. He noted Nigeria’s Nollywood as the world’s most prolific producer, with some 2,500 films annually. Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Ethiopia also show signs of steady growth despite limited resources.

“In most African countries, cinema is managed by the state with support for both public and private players,” he said, noting that many governments have “borrowed models from countries like China.” Professional guilds and unions have also emerged over the past decades, signaling structural maturity.

Iranian filmmakers, he added, have mostly worked in East Africa due to historical ties dating back to the Shirazi diaspora. Documentaries and features have been shot in Kenya, Somalia, and South Africa, including ‘The Fourth Child’ by Vahid Mousaian and Majid Majidi’s ‘Muhammad: The Messenger of God,’ partially filmed in Bela Bela.

Arab Ahmadi criticized Tehran’s limited engagement with Africa, saying the government “has yet to prioritize” the continent in its cultural diplomacy. He pointed to countries like Turkey and China that actively use their media exports to build soft power in Africa.

“African film festivals are golden opportunities,” he said. “They’re not just showcases — they’re gateways to global recognition.”

## Parliament to review lethal force law for park rangers amid rising casualties

## Social Desk

Iran’s Parliament is to review legal reforms concerning the use of firearms by environmental enforcement officers, following a sharp rise in deadly confrontations between park rangers and armed poachers, the country’s top environmental protection official said on Friday.

The move was announced by Brigadier General Reza Rastegar, commander of the Protection Unit of Iran’s Department of Environment, after a closed-door session with Parliament’s Legal and Judicial Committee in Tehran, IRNA reported.

He said a joint legal team was formed to revise provisions of a 1994 law governing the use of weapons by military and security forces, which also applies to rangers.

The law, initially drafted for armed forces in wartime conditions, sets strict criteria for opening fire — including verbal warnings and warning shots — even when rangers face armed threats. Environmental officials argue the statute is outdated, given the evolving nature of threats to protected areas and personnel. Proposed amendments seek to enhance legal protection for rangers and reduce their exposure to prosecution in



cases of self-defense.

“The goal is to strike a fair balance between citizen safety and the responsibilities of armed officers,” Rastegar said, calling the reform “a national security necessity.”

Iran has one of the world’s highest ranger mortality rates. At least 121 park rangers have been killed in the line of duty, according to official data. Over 379 rangers have been permanently injured or disabled in similar confrontations, some facing life-altering trauma.

“The imbalance between law enforcement responsibilities and legal protection has turned our rangers into moving

targets,” said a senior official involved in the legislative effort, noting that fewer than 40 fallen rangers have been recognized as martyrs by the government.

Under current rules, rangers are barred from using firearms unless directly fired upon. As a result, many are killed or injured before they can act. “It’s not just about defending wildlife anymore — it’s about survival,” said a conservation analyst in Tehran.

Iran employs roughly 3,500 park rangers to patrol millions of hectares of protected land, meaning each ranger is responsible for over 10,000 hectares — more than double the international standard.