

## **Interview with Vahid Jalili, Head of the Policy-making Council of Ammar Popular Film Festival (APFF)**

### **Trump Has Racist Tendencies**

Head of the Policy-making Council of Ammar Popular Film Festival, Vahid Jalili, points out that his country “has undergone a very difficult historical period; for example, the Great Britain bringing about famine in the last century that caused many people to lose their lives, and the coup in 1953 led by the US and Great Britain, as well as the 1976 coup” and other relevant incidents. He goes on to say that, “We share common experiences with the Argentine people, especially in the context of Argentina's conflict with England over the islands of Malvinas. We realize the values of Argentina's cinema, which we call “The Third Cinema”. That is why we come to this conclusion that Ammar Festival follows the same path (as Argentine cinema). Independent Iranian films have been screened in Italy, Bahrain, Canada, France, the United States and even Gaza. We pass on Iranian Cinema’s message of Resistance, Commitment, Ethics and the Fight against cruelty to others”.

#### **1. What were the criteria for selection of the films in Buenos Aires Film Festival?**

Iranian cinema is one of the top ten cinemas in the world in terms of quantity and quality of film production per year. Such a position has been achieved after the Islamic Revolution (1979). In the fifty years of the Imperial era during which the film industry had existed in Iran, no one had ever heard of Iranian cinema. Only a small part of Iranian cinema, sad to say, today is introduced to the world while its more professional and attractive parts are actually censored.

This year, a famous Latin American film-maker, Miguel Littin, visited Iran and had several meetings with Iranian film-makers. Mr. Littin found it surprising why the world is not familiar with the important part of Iranian professional cinema, in which Iran’s historical, political, cultural, and social facts are presented in a fine cinematic language.

This week’s film is a step to introduce Iranian cinema- which has been censored thus far- to a global audience that is often ignored in European festivals.

#### **2. How notable are regarded these films in today’s cinema?**

Three cinematic productions which have been selected to be screened in Argentina are considered to be important works of recent years in Iranian cinema, which many people have seen in Iran. The “Orphanage of Iran” was screened in 2016, and we are going to hold the first foreign screening of the film in Argentina in collaboration with

INCA Institute. Moreover, “The Golden Collars” is a 2012 film based on actual events of 2009 in Iran, both of which (the two mentioned films) represent the patriotic and independence of the Iranian nation.

**3. Are there any works by directors like Kiarostami and Panahi in the festival?**

We have directors other than Abbas Kiarostami and Asghar Farhadi among Iranian cinematographers, who have not been featured in the festival today, including Mr. Abolghasem Talebi, Ebrahim Hatamikia, etc. Our goal is to present a new and realistic image of the origins of Iranian people’s beliefs and creeds. The Iranian community does not appreciate the cinematic works that the West regards as notable since they represent no true image of Iran. As a result, Ammar Festival has put its mission in line with the reconciliation of the people with cinema and the films that bring a realistic and enlightened image of the Iranian people. The directors to whom you referred are considered neither the totality of Iranian cinema nor its most prominent examples.

**4. What do you think about Trump’s measures against Iran and the other six countries?**

Trump’s order which is based on a series of racist tendencies has been rendered ineffective. These boundaries were at the start in the fields of culture, art and cinema while they have now expanded. Then they awarded the Oscar (the Academy Awards) to an anti-Iranian film called “Argo”, and also awarded some cinematographers who turned a blind eye to their culture and identity. We are totally familiar with these racist standards.