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Now in its 22nd year, the 2011 Human Rights Watch Film Festival makes its debut in Nairobi, Kenya with an extraordinary program of films set to inspire, inform and spark debate.

The films will demonstrate the power of traditional and new media to influence filmmaking and impact human rights.

“By incorporating many forms of media, human rights filmmakers are increasing their impact, advancing the art of filmmaking, and bringing human rights stories to a broader audience,” John Biaggi, Human Rights Watch Film Festival director in New York said. “This year we are excited to bring the festival to Nairobi, Kenya for the first time, in conjunction with the opening of our new Nairobi Human Rights Watch office.”

The festival will run over 4 days from November 14 to 17, 2011 at the Alliance Française de Nairobi.

The opening night will start off with a bang, with a devastating film that documents the jubilant pro-democracy protests in Iran in 2009 and the brutal crackdown against non-violent protestors that followed, weaving together protest footage, interviews and animation in ‘The Green Wave.’ The second night, the film ‘You Don’t Like the Truth’, which includes real footage of the interrogation of a teenager held in Guantanamo, will provoke discussion of the links between US counterterrorism policy and an issue that has raised much hype in Kenya: the illegal rendition of alleged terrorist suspects to
secret detention centers all over the world. The recent release of our own Al-Amin Kimathi from illegal detention in Uganda is a case in point.

The third night will feature ‘Impunity’, a portrayal of Colombia’s truth and reconciliation process – from the point of view of the victims. The film raises questions about how to fulfill victim’s rights to both truth and justice in the wake of armed conflict, and will provoke discussion of Kenya’s own TJRC and what it can and cannot deliver for victims. The festival will end on a reflective note for Kenyans as we hurtle towards the 2012 elections, with the film ‘The Team’, in which youth from different ethnic groups come together and use sport to explore, debate and dissect the curse of ‘tribalism’ that has gripped Kenya today.

Each film will be followed by a panel discussion, featuring Kenyan civil society activists, who will engage the audience in debating the film’s relevance to our situation in Kenya, and the possible solutions and engagements that might lead to a peaceful and socially cohesive future.

**Film Summaries and Discussants**

*Monday 14 November 2011, 7:30 p.m: The Green Wave (Iran)*

By providing a backdrop for the urgent blog posts and tweets that became a lifeline to Iranian pro-democracy activists, *The Green Wave* recounts the dramatic events of one of the most severe domestic crises in the history of Iran. Filmmaker Ali Samadi Ahadi takes viewers into the world of Iranian citizens who risked their lives in the hopes of a better future. Interweaving online posts, video footage caught by those present, and extensive interviews, the film is an artistic portrait of modern political rebellion, an exposé of government-sanctioned violence, and a vision of hope that continued resistance may galvanize a new future.

Discussants: Atsango Chesoni (Kenya Human Rights Commission), Mwalimu Mati (Mars Kenya), and Njonjo Mue (International Center for Transitional Justice)

*Tuesday 15 November 2011, 6:30 p.m: You Don’t Like the Truth (U.S./Guantanamo)*

Luc Côté and Patricio Henríquez’s shocking *You Don’t Like The Truth – 4 Days inside Guantanamo* uses seven hours of declassified security camera footage from the Canadian government to show the interrogation of 16-year-old Omar Khadr, a Canadian citizen and Guantanamo detainee. The film delves into the unfolding high-stakes game of cat and mouse between captor and captive as it analyzes the political, legal, and psychological aspects of the interrogation through interviews with Khadr’s lawyers, a psychiatrist, an investigative journalist, former Guantanamo detainees, and a former US interrogator.

Discussants: Al-Amin Kimathi (Muslim Human Rights Forum), Mbugua Mureithi (Advocate), Binaifer Nowrojee (Open Society Initiative for East Africa)

*Wednesday 16 November 2011, 6:30 p.m.: Impunity (Colombia)*

Hollman Morris and Juan José Lozano’s *Impunity* documents the hearings in which Colombian paramilitary members describe atrocities they have committed as the families of their victims listen and watch on computer screens. Through this testimony, footage of the crimes, and interviews with victims and experts, the brutal history of paramilitary violence comes to light. Yet due to serious irregularities in the justice and peace process, many families express their fear that they will never know the truth surrounding the deaths of their loved ones, and that the perpetrators will escape punishment.

Discussants: Christine Alai (International Centre for Transitional Justice), Margaret Shava (Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission), representative of the Embassy of Colombia in Kenya (invited)
Thursday 17 November 2011: The Team (Kenya)

Patrick Reed’s remarkable *The Team* brings us behind the scenes of an innovative television soap opera that aims to ease Kenya’s volatile ethnic tensions and set the stage for dialogue and understanding. The story line focuses on a tribally diverse soccer team whose members must find ways to overcome deep-rooted hatred and work together to succeed. Thousands of viewers across Kenya gather around their TV screens to watch the story unfold—building mutual understanding and acceptance with each episode. Yet the message may come too late, as the actors themselves may become victims of the discrimination they have been so passionately seeking to combat.

Discussants: Mburugu Gikunda (Media Focus on Africa), cast members of ‘The Team’

Program attached.

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*Human Rights Watch*

Human Rights Watch is one of the world’s leading independent organizations dedicated to defending and protecting human rights. We work tenaciously to lay the legal and moral groundwork for deep-rooted change and fight to bring greater justice and security to people around the world. Through the Human Rights Watch Film Festival we bear witness to human rights violations and create a forum for courageous individuals on both sides of the lens to empower audiences with the knowledge that personal commitment can make a difference. The film festival brings to life human rights abuses through storytelling in a way that challenges each individual to empathize and demand justice for all people. To learn more about our work or to make a donation, visit [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)

PUBLIC SCREENING SCHEDULE

**Monday 14 November 2011**
6.30pm – 7.15 pm: Opening Reception
7.30 pm: **THE GREEN WAVE** (IRAN, 80 minutes)
Discussants: Atsango Chesoni, Mwalimu Mati and Njonjo Mue

**Tuesday 15 November 2011**
6.30pm: **YOU DON’T LIKE THE TRUTH** (US, 99 minutes)
Discussants: Al-Amin Kimathi, Mbugua Mureithi, Binaifer Nowrojee

**Wednesday 16 November 2011**
6.30pm: **IMPUNITY** (COLOMBIA, 99 minutes)
Discussants: Christine Alai, Margaret Shava

**Thursday 17 November 2011**
6.30pm: **THE TEAM** (KENYA, 80 minutes)
Discussants: Mburugu Gikunda, cast members of ‘The Team’