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PRESS RELEASE

FERA STRONGLY CONDEMNS THE ARREST OF IRANIAN FILM DIRECTOR PANAHI

The Federation of European Film Directors strongly condemns the reported arrest of Iranian Film director Jafar Panahi and his family Monday evening.

This disgraceful attempt at silencing a fellow film director is a blatant violation of fundamental human rights and speaks to the oppressive nature of the current Iranian regime. We condemn the arrest of Panahi in the strongest terms.

Freedom of expression and debate are core values of every enlightened society and should be welcomed by any political leadership that claims to represent its people.

Mr Panahi is one of the leading voices of modern Iranian cinema. His social realistic films are internationally acclaimed, winning the Camera d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival for his debut feature *The White Balloon*, the Golden Lion award for *The Circle* at the Venice Film Festival and the Silver Bear at the Berlinale for *Offside* – films that are all banned in Iran.

European film directors are deeply concerned for the safety and well being of our Iranian colleague and his family and call for their immediate release.

FERA is the European federation of national associations of film and television directors. Established in Venice in 1980 by a small group of far-sighted directors, it has grown to include 37 associations from 30 European countries. FERA is based in Brussels, Belgium.

The current President of FERA is István Szabó (elected in 2008). Previous presidents are: Liv Ullmann, Manuel Gutierrez Aragon, Francesco Maselli, John Boorman, Robert Enrico, Juan Antonio Bardem, Krzysztof Zanussi, Ettore Scola and Peter Fleischmann.

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