
Press release

Geneva, 2 March 2020

COVID-19: THE 2020 EDITION OF THE FIFDH IS CANCELLED. THE FESTIVAL MAINTAINS ITS MISSION IN AN ADAPTED FORMAT.

Following the decision of the Federal Council to cancel any event with more than 1000 people, and in consultation with health authorities of the Canton of Geneva, the FIFDH's Foundation Council, the Management of the FIFDH and its team have taken the decision to cancel the 18th edition of the Festival, which was due to be held from the 6th to the 15th of March 2020, in 65 locations in Geneva and its surrounding areas.

This decision means that all public screenings of the Festival are cancelled. However, the team is hard at work to propose an adapted format that respects the FIFDH's mission to promote human rights, in particular by using digital tools. Further details will be provided in the coming days.

In accordance with the instructions of the Federal Council following the spread of COVID-19 in Switzerland, *"we have consulted widely, in particular with the Head of Public Health of the Canton of Geneva and the Service for the Prevention and Control of Epidemics of the HUG, states FIFDH Director Isabelle Gattiker. Given the international nature of the Festival, the nature of the venues and the impossibility of identifying the public in the event of contamination, we received a negative advisory notice from the cantonal authorities, which led us to the regrettable but inevitable decision to cancel the 18th edition of the Festival"*.

Every year, the Festival welcomes about 40'000 people and guests from 30 countries. *"It is an extremely difficult decision for the team, but it is a case of force majeure emphasises FIFDH President Bruno Giussani. We take our responsibility to ensure the safety and health of our guests, our public and the members of the Festival team very seriously. We are confident that our guests, partners, benefactors, as well as the thousands of people who trust us and attend the Festival every year will understand"*, he adds.

Given the importance of the human rights issues addressed at the Festival, the FIFDH team is already preparing an adapted offering that takes into account the current constraints. *"The issue at hand, that of human rights, is essential – and even more so in this context. We wish to pursue our mission of giving artists and activists a voice, denouncing abuses around the world and highlighting possible solutions. To this end, we have the ambition to maintain some specific projects of the Festival and to propose debates and other online initiatives in the weeks and months to come"*. The details of this "adapted FIFDH" will be communicated over the coming days.

Those who have already purchased tickets, passes or accreditations for the screenings will have the possibility to be reimbursed if they so wish. Details will be available on fifdh.org.

In light of this situation, we ask everyone to show understanding and to refrain as much as possible from contacting the members of the team, which is fully mobilized to make rapid progress on the necessary adjustments. In this very special context, the Foundation Board, the FIFDH Management and its team would like to thank all those who have contributed to and are contributing to the Festival's mission.

CONTACTS

Sara Dominguez
Media Relations Manager
s.dominguez@fifdh.org
+41 (0)78 601 08 96

Canelle Labro
Press Officer
c.labro@fifdh.org
+33 (0)6 14 18 00 24