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## 24<sup>th</sup> Edition of FIFDH 2026 - Resisting Authoritarianism

From 6 to 15 March 2026, the International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights (FIFDH) returns at a time of accelerating authoritarianism, weakening international law and growing repression. Civilians, and especially marginalised groups, are bearing the brunt of these shifts. FIFDH responds by highlighting resistance, solidarity and collective action. As a platform for dialogue and engagement, the Festival brings together activists, filmmakers, journalists and artists, such as Adèle Haenel, Francesca Albanese, Yara El-Ghadban, Claire Denis, Vanessa Eileen Thompson, Féris Barkat, Nina Meurisse, Susan Stryker, and Charles Villa.

### Authoritarian Drift and the Spectrum of Fascism

Across the United States and Europe, democratic norms are under strain as authoritarian politics gain ground and neo-fascist ideas move into the mainstream, FIFDH examines these shifts through a series of dedicated Forums. One Forum focuses on the United States, where policies under the Trump administration are weakening democratic institutions. Another turns to Europe, where judicial independence, media freedom and the right to protest face growing pressure. The world premiere of *Meloni Rising* (Anna Bonalume & Jérémy Frey) opens this strand. Additional Forums address repression in Argentina, China and Iran, placing these dynamics in a global perspective.

All over the world, authoritarian policies consistently target those already pushed to the margins. To expose the erosion of fundamental freedoms and stand in solidarity with those who defend them, FIFDH brings together films and discussions on police violence and racial justice (in the presence of activist and professor **Vanessa Eileen Thompson**); conservative attacks on trans rights (*Just Kids* by Gianna Toboni, with the historian **Susan Stryker**); everyday resistance in South Africa (*Laundry* by Zamo Mkhwanazi); and political control over intimate life (*Julian* by Cato Kusters, with **Nina Meurisse**, and *Between Dreams and Hope* by Farnoosh Samadi).

### The Breakdown of the International Order

The 24<sup>th</sup> edition of FIFDH examines the challenges posed by the erosion of international law and multilateralism. Two Forums focus on the consequences of contemporary forms of imperialism, resource extraction and the conflicts they fuel in **Democratic Republic of the Congo** (Kivu) and **Sudan**, where civilians are caught between opposing forces. *Palestine 36* (Annemarie Jacir) revisits the 1936 uprising of the Palestinian population against colonial domination in a region under British mandate, shedding light on the roots of a conflict that crystallises the fractures of international law.

Following the screening of ***Disunited Nations*** (Christophe Cotteret), UN Special Rapporteur **Francesca Albanese** discusses the international community's paralysis in the face of the current genocide in Gaza. Weakened by major budget cuts that undermine **International Geneva**, FIFDH examines the erosion of international law through a Forum devoted to the crisis of multilateralism.

## **Organising Resistance: Collective Action and Civil Society Mobilisation**

As authoritarianism hardens, crises deepen and democratic norms come under strain, resistance is taking shape in many forms. ***From GAZA with LOVE***, a project led by reporter **Charles Villa**, gives a voice to the children of Gaza. The Forum **Gaza: Resisting, Bearing Witness, Creating** (with author **Yara El-Ghadban**) showcases a series of short films by Gaza-based filmmakers, produced by Rashid Masharawi as part of ***From Ground Zero +***. Together, they affirm art as a form of resistance in the face of destruction that targets not only lives, but culture and memory itself.

Climate breakdown is addressed through the question of citizen action in a Forum bringing together sociologist **Nicolas Framont** and activists **Féris Barkat** and **Pippi van Ommen** (Extinction Rebellion). The discussion follows the international premiere of ***The System*** (Joris Postema). After the screening of ***Portuali*** (Perla Sardella), which follows dockworkers in Genoa united in a trade union struggle to disrupt the global arms trade, actress and activist **Adèle Haenel** alongside novelist and human rights activist **Sarah Schulman** take part in a Forum that treats solidarity not as a slogan, but as a grounded, demanding and politically situated practice.

The programme also turns to forms of resistance rooted in personal experience: ***Mailin*** (María Silvia Esteve), a survivor's fight for justice in the face of the impunity of a priest who abused her; ***Black Water*** (Natxo Leuza), which connects climate injustice to forced displacement; and ***A Fox Under a Pink Moon*** (Mehrddad Oskouei and Soraya Akhlaghi), where artistic creation becomes a lifeline for a young Afghan woman facing patriarchal violence and exile.

## **FIFDH: cinema as a driver of impact**

Through its professional programme Impact Days, FIFDH supports films still in development by helping shape their impact strategies and pathways to change. Its new Impact Spotlight section presents the European premiere of ***Yurlu | Country*** by Yaara Bou Melhem (Impact Days 2025), which examines the responsibility of Australian authorities and corporations for the devastation caused by asbestos to Indigenous communities. Presented as an international premiere, ***Molly vs the Machines*** by Marc Silver follows a father's fight to hold Meta accountable after his daughter's suicide. ***Traces*** by Alisa Kovalenko and Marysia Nikitiuk (Sublimages Award, Impact Days 2025) centres the voices of survivors of rape in Ukraine as they oppose amnesty for Russian soldiers. The Festival closes on Sunday 15 March with the presence of acclaimed filmmaker **Claire Denis**, who will present her latest film, ***The Fence***, in Swiss premiere. A retrospective of her work will follow at the Cinémathèque suisse from 17 March.

### **CONTACT**

Yael Golan, Head of Media Relations, [y.golan@fifdh.org](mailto:y.golan@fifdh.org)  
Mete Seven, Press Officer, [m.seven@fifdh.org](mailto:m.seven@fifdh.org)