



Press Release – Geneva, 14 March 2026

FIFDH Awards Confront the World Head-On

The 24th Geneva International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights (FIFDH) drew more than 32,000 festivalgoers, with screenings and events selling out throughout the ten-day programme. Audiences discovered a rich and timely film selection, alongside discussions featuring more than 200 guests from the worlds of art, science, politics and activism. At a time marked by rising authoritarianism and ongoing conflicts, the Festival reaffirmed the power of cinema and of public debate. Thirteen works received awards, including films from Iran and Sudan exploring exile, resistance, resilience and hope.

AWARD-WINNING FILMS

The two international juries of the 24th FIFDH have announced this year's prize winners, highlighting three outstanding films. From Afghanistan and Iran, *A Fox Under a Pink Moon* by **Soraya Akhlaghi** and **Mehrdad Oskouei** follows a young Afghan artist as she films her path into exile and her determination to keep living and creating despite the risks she faces. From Poland, *Letters from Wolf Street* by **Arjun Talwar** offers an intimate portrait of migration and the invisible boundaries created by everyday racism. From Sudan, *Cotton Queen* by **Suzannah Mirghani** is a luminous fiction that weaves together memory, power struggles and women's stories. Three films, three continents and one shared conviction: cinema can still challenge dominant narratives and amplify voices that others seek to silence.

"This year's awards reflect the diversity of voices that FIFDH brings to the fore. These films shed light on realities too often overlooked and open up powerful new perspectives. We are proud to celebrate works that inspire courage and give voice to those too often unheard." - **Laura Longobardi and Laila Alonso Huarte, Editorial Co-Directors, FIFDH**

*The full list of awards appears at the end of this press release.

FIFDH HIGHLIGHTS AND IMPACT

The **Vision for Human Rights** Award, presented by the Focus Jury, composed of representatives from Amnesty International Switzerland, the International Service for Human Rights, HEKS/EPER, the Policy/Strategy Group and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, was awarded to **Yurlu | Country** by Yaara Bou Melhem (Impact Days 2025 selection). The documentary examines the asbestos mine at Wittenoom, operated with no regard for the Aboriginal communities who are the traditional custodians of the land. It exposes colonial abuses, corporate impunity, repeated human rights violations and environmental devastation, while underlining the urgent need for real legal accountability. Extending the voices of filmmakers and protagonists beyond cinema screens, the Festival and its partners also enabled the director and Johnnell Parker, Vice-President of the Banjima Aboriginal community, to speak at the United Nations during a side event of the Human Rights Council.

Among the twenty Forums held during the Festival, several attracted large audiences. **How Can Europe Counter the Return of Fascism?**, with historians and activists Stefanie Prezioso, Narjess Djaafar, Emmanuel Achiri and Meriam Mastour, examined the normalisation of far-right ideas and the gradual erosion of the rule of law. The Forum **The Failure of International Law in Gaza** addressed the inability of international institutions to respond to violence against civilian populations, reflecting the work of Francesca Albanese, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Finally, **Solidarity Is Not a Slogan**, with Sarah Schulman and Adèle Haenel, explored solidarity as a demanding political practice - shaped by tensions, yet essential to contemporary struggles. Together, these discussions created space for collective reflection on the issues confronting the world today.

“The films shown at FIFDH come from across the world and remind us that human rights are not just legal concepts : they are lived realities, wherever we come from and whoever we are (...). The artists behind these films give voice to the silent majority and, in doing so, stand up for human rights.” - **Volker Türk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 6 March 2026**

UPCOMING SWISS RELEASES

Several films from the 24th FIFDH will soon be released in Switzerland, offering audiences another chance to see them after the Festival.

- **Le Cri des gardes - Claire Denis**, screened as part of a retrospective at the Cinémathèque suisse from 17 March 2026
- **Don't Let the Sun - Jacqueline Zünd**, Swiss release - 18 March 2026
- **Palestine 36 - Annemarie Jacir**, Swiss release - 18 March 2026
- **Solidarity - David Bernet**, Swiss release - 18 March 2026
- **La Beauté de l'Âne - Dea Gjinovci**, Swiss release - 25 March 2026
- **Lost Land - Akio Fujimoto**, Swiss release - 20 May 2026
- **Laundry - Zamo Mkhwanazi**, French-speaking Switzerland release - 2 September 2026
- **Elephants & Squirrels - Gregor Brändli**, French-speaking Switzerland release - 23 September 2026
- **Freedom Le destin de Shewit - Anne-Frédérique Widmann**, Swiss release - 23 September 2026
- **Temps présent: IA mon confident mortel - Corinne Portier & Jacqueline Dubuis**, available on Play RTS



2026 AWARD WINNERS

Award-winning films will be screened on Sunday 15 March at Cinémas du Grütli.

Schedule and details: fifdh.org

INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION

The Creative Documentary Competition Jury is composed of photographer and filmmaker Zed Nelson, writer and playwright Sarah Schulman, and filmmaker Dieudo Hamadi.

FIFDH GENEVA GRAND AWARD

10'000 CHF, OFFERED BY THE CITY AND CANTON OF GENEVA

Awarded by the International Documentary Jury

A Fox Under a Pink Moon - Soraya Akhlaghi & Mehrdad Oskouei

A talented young Afghan artist driven by a powerful desire to transform her reality through art, Soraya Akhlaghi documents her courageous and deeply risky journey through a long-distance cinematic collaboration with Iranian filmmaker Mehrdad Oskouei. Their connection across technology and geography mirrors an experience shared by millions of migrants in a time of global upheaval. *A Fox Under a Pink Moon* is a deeply personal work: creative, harrowing and enlightening.

FIFDH GILDA VIEIRA DE MELLO AWARD IN HONOUR OF HER SON SERGIO VIEIRA DE MELLO

5'000 CHF, OFFERED BY THE BARBARA HENDRICKS FOUNDATION FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

Awarded by the International Documentary Jury

Letters from Wolf Street - Arjun Talwar

A unique work. Made on a small budget but with great care, *Letters from Wolf Street* is a nuanced, sophisticated and highly accessible film about grief and belonging. Far from his native India, Arjun Talwar confronts his own

loneliness by building close relationships with neighbours in Warsaw. Through these encounters, he reveals everyday racism and the barriers to acceptance faced by migrants and long-standing Polish minorities alike. Both revealing and tender.

YOUTH JURY AWARD - DOCUMENTARY

3'000 CHF, OFFERED BY PEACE BRIGADES

INTERNATIONAL (PBI) AND THE HOSPICE GÉNÉRAL

Awarded by the Youth Jury - Documentary: Sekouba Camara, Andrea Carrer, Ali Jawadi, Amélie Lantéri, Elisa Levacher, Hesam Mohammadi and Dario Rizzo

A Fox Under a Pink Moon - Soraya Akhlaghi & Mehrdad Oskouei

The Youth Jury for Documentaries chose to award *A Fox Under a Pink Moon*, a particularly moving film. A strong sense of closeness emerged with Soraya, the protagonist, notably because of her age, but also through shared life experiences. This sense of closeness is reinforced by the film's distinctive form, which alternates fragments of her daily life filmed on a phone with animated sequences inspired by her drawings and sculptures. Soraya does not film when she wants to, but when she can. This constraint gives the film its sincerity and lends particular weight to every image. Through these fragments emerges the turbulent journey of a resilient young woman who transforms her wounds into creation, and for whom art becomes a means of survival and renewal.

FICTION COMPETITION

The Fiction Jury is represented by writer Adania Shibli, director Elie Grappe, programmer Jenny Billeter, and Thierry Oppikofer, representative of the Barbour Foundation.

FIFDH FICTION GRAND AWARD

10'000 CHF, OFFERED BY THE HÉLÈNE AND VICTOR BARBOUR FOUNDATION

Awarded by the Fiction Jury

Cotton Queen - Suzannah Mirghani

The film portrays its characters with delicacy and ambiguity, blending tenderness with moments of humour. Here humour becomes a way of confronting cruelty - and surviving it. At the same time, the story invites us to imagine paths other than those already laid out.

Reimagining the past becomes a way of reclaiming a place in history for those who have been erased.

Additionally, the film reveals an understanding of feminism that is embedded in colonial experiences. Last but not least, it brings the question of human rights close to the question of nature, where the abuse of land and plants is not separate from the abuse of humans.

SPECIAL MENTIONS

Lost Land - Akio Fujimoto

For portraying play as a vital way of resisting pain and despair, and for showing how those who have lost everything are often the first to help others, remaining undefeated.

Between Dreams and Hope - Farnoosh Samadi

For its exploration of the strength of non-normative love as a force against social constraints.

YOUTH JURY AWARD - FICTION

3'000 CHF, OFFERED BY THE HOSPICE GÉNÉRAL
Awarded by the Youth Jury - Fiction: Laura Bapst Apst, Julien Chapiteau, Alice Kündig, Charles Massicote, Askadirou Nfankue, Dimitrios Sofologis and Mohammad Yousufi

Laundry - Zamo Mkhwanazi

The jury was deeply moved by this rich and complex film, which subtly portrays the repression of racialised communities under

South Africa's apartheid regime. The film's remarkable use of music offers both escape from and contrast with the omnipresent violence endured by its protagonists. Through the actors' performances, the narrative and thematic variations, and many other elements, all executed with great skill, this film unquestionably stood out.

FOCUS COMPETITION

The Focus Jury is composed of Judith Fiss (Amnesty International Switzerland), Elise Golay (International Service for Human Rights – ISHR), Spring Gombe (Policy/Strategy Group), Kibrom Mehari (HEKS/EPER) and Sharon Oseku-Frainier (Ramsar Convention on Wetlands).

VISION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

5'000 CHF

Awarded by the Focus Jury

Yurlu | Country - Yaara Bou Melhem

This film stands out for the quiet force of its perspective and its clear call for accountability. Yaara Bou Melhem's hypnotic cinematography portrays Banjima Country with tenderness and dignity, while offering an uncompromising critique of colonial exploitation of land, labour, sovereignty and cultural heritage. Its consequences are still felt today in the deadly legacy of asbestos, which continues to claim lives. *Yurlu | Country* shows how environmental destruction and human rights abuses intersect through corporate impunity and government complicity. At a time of renewed global expansion in mining and resource extraction, its urgency is unmistakable.

IMPACT DAYS

STORYBOARD IMPACT AWARD

10'000 CHF awarded to a project from the Impact Days 2026 International Selection.

OLIMBI - Mother Courage - Karlo Mlinar

ANOTHER STORY FOUNDATION X IMPACT SOCIAL CLUB AWARD

2'500 EUR and a consulting session awarded to a project from the International Selection or Swiss Focus.

This is Not a Civil War - Hnin Thet Hmu Khin and Oliver Petrie

SWISS FOCUS IMPACT AWARD

2'500 CHF awarded to a project presented in Swiss Focus.

To the Moon and Black - Elisa Gómez Alvarez

SUBLIMAGES IMPACT AWARD

Translation and subtitling for a project from the International Selection or Swiss Focus.

Gaza Sunbirds - Flavia Cappellini

THE WORKING FILMS IMPACT AWARD

Consulting workshop for a project from the International Selection.

The Quiet Part - Rachel Lauren Mueller

CULTURAL MEDIATION

SPECIAL JURY - in hospitals

CONVERGENCES AWARD

FIFDH collaborates with the Maison de l'enfance et de l'adolescence (MEA) through a Convergences Jury workshop bringing together adolescents from different units.

NIÑXS - Kani Lapuerta

The jury was moved by the film's luminous energy and its moments of genuine joy : an approach still rarely seen in stories about transition. Niñxs invites empathy and highlights the importance of recognising each person's journey on their own terms.

SPECIAL JURY - in correctional facilities

CHAMP-DOLLON JURY AWARD AND LA BRENAZ JURY AWARD

Avant, il n'y avait rien - Yvann Yagchi

The jury appreciated the exchange with the director, which deepened their understanding of the film. The documentary follows two friends whose lives are shaped by distant conflicts that ultimately drive them apart. It offers another perspective on this conflict and invites empathy for those caught up in it.

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