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Iranian Filmmaker Behrouz Ghobadi Released from Prison Following Amnesty International Campaign with Hollywood Artists

Amnesty International USA announced on 22 January that Kurdish Iranian filmmaker Behrouz Ghobadi – the younger brother of internationally acclaimed film director Bahman Ghobadi (Rhino Season) – has been freed from prison in Iran, following a campaign demanding his release that engaged prominent Hollywood directors, actors and independent filmmakers.

Behrouz Ghobadi was held incommunicado in an undisclosed location since his arrest on 4 November 2012. His lawyer and members of his family were refused repeated requests to see him.

Behrouz Ghobadi should never have been detained. His detention was one of a series of attacks on freedom of expression by the Iranian authorities.

In December 2012, following an [Urgent Action](#) issued by Amnesty International on 27 November 2012, Amnesty International's global membership sprang into action. Prominent Hollywood artists including Martin Scorsese, Paul Haggis, Liam Neeson, James Franco and Mila Kunis joined Amnesty International USA's campaign demanding Behrouz Ghobadi's release by speaking out and signing a petition.

Actress Nazanin Boniadi, an Amnesty International USA spokesperson, helped to launch the [campaign](#), together with journalist, author and activist Roxana Saberi. In a joint statement, they said: "We are delighted that he [Behrouz Ghobadi] has reunited with his family, particularly his newborn son, Harmang. We are grateful to countless people who took action with Amnesty International to ensure his freedom. Our collective voices always create a din of protest that is too loud to ignore."

Behrouz Ghobadi is still in Iran.

He is the director of three short films titled "That Man," "Hunt," and "Those Two People," and has worked as an executive producer and production manager for six of his brother's controversial films. His family has heard that he is accused of "acting against national security", but maintains his innocence given that he has never been involved in politics and has no connections to dissident activities other than his brother's films.

His brother, Bahman Ghobadi, is an outspoken government critic currently living in exile. Bahman Ghobadi's films *A Time for Drunken Horses* (2000), *Turtles Can Fly* (2004), *Marooned in Iraq* (2002) and *Half Moon* (2006) have won numerous prizes at film festivals. Several of his films are banned in Iran. One of his recent films, *No One Knows About Persian Cats* (2009), chronicles the struggles of young Iranian musicians attempting to evade censorship, while his most recent film, *Rhino Season* (2012), tells the story of a poet who spent 27 years in prison in Iran.

The call for Behrouz Ghobadi's release was part of an ongoing Amnesty International campaign to expose and bring an end to the imprisonment of dissenters and peaceful protestors in Iran.

Among them, acclaimed filmmaker Ja'far Panahi who was held for two months in 2010 was the subject of global campaigning by Amnesty International members and supporters demanding his release.

Though currently at liberty, Ja'far Panahi still faces a six-year prison sentence and is banned from travelling abroad and from making films.

The right to freedom of expression includes the "freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media".

Public Document

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