



JOURNEYS OF FREEDOM. ONE WORLD FILM FESTIVAL RETURNS TO CINEMAS WITH STARK WARNINGS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Press Release

Prague, 2 February 2022

Two years ago, the pandemic shook the planet and One World. Now, things that are shaking the world of human rights remain in the shadow of this unexpected health crisis, but our festival can't sit back and ignore them. The ongoing authoritarian regime in Belarus, the re-established military dictatorship in Burma, the pressure and criminalisation of the Russian opposition, but also an independent judiciary in Poland under threat... One World can't just stand by and watch as human rights continue to deteriorate across the globe. We must do something to draw people's attention to it again. Especially in a year like this when People in Need celebrates its 30th anniversary since its founding. The 24th Annual International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival will take place physically in 25 cities across the Czech Republic from 21 March to 3 April. Prague audiences can look forward to the festival's Prague dates from 23 to 31 March. Select films will also be made available on the [One World Online](#) platform once the festival is over.

"The effort to promote human rights and to help wherever necessary by any possible (and impossible) means is always a challenge and doesn't bring results overnight. Quite the opposite, in fact. While twenty years ago, it seemed as if our fragmented world was slowly but surely moving closer to one better world, today's situation is far from optimistic. That being said, this year's festival will feature a program-wide selection of stories about brave heroes tirelessly fighting for freedom and democracy, proving that active resistance to injustice makes a difference and is here to stay, no matter what happens," describes festival director Ondřej Kamenický. He adds that the festival already had a similar theme back in 2008 when they roused audiences with the slogan LET'S SILENCE THIS SONG, but unfortunately this song continues to play as loud as ever. *"Although the situation with human rights isn't going the way we had hoped, we at least have one consolation: we only lose if we give up. We don't want to fall victim to self-pity, but we know that if we were to rouse audiences now like we did then, the public wouldn't feel so convinced of the urgency, nor would we, for that matter. We have to ask ourselves, 'How is it possible that this situation keeps playing on repeat?' Who's to blame for it?"* says Kamenický.

The festival will continue in its tradition with regard to festival dates, which will again be in March. *"Although it might not seem like it right now given the current situation, we believe that the COVID-19 pandemic will be much tamer in two months' time and that epidemiologists' predictions of the Omicron variant spreading faster but with milder symptoms will prove to be true. Of course, we plan to follow all current government regulations and put together a safe festival for everyone,"* stresses Kamenický.



The festival campaign was again, for the fifth time, put together **by Studio Matyáše Trnky, s.r.o.** Public outcry, disturbances, turmoil, shooting, shouting, barefooted people fleeing from armed soldiers wearing combat boots. These are the most common scenes you'll see in this year's festival visuals. *"This year's campaign clearly reflects the theme of the festival and presents various scenarios where roads to freedom can become roads to suppression. We reject these scenarios with a flat-out NO, which shows up in the graphics a lot as a recurring motif. The colour red alludes to the importance of not turning a blind eye to similar scenarios and not ignoring the suppression of human rights in other parts of the globe. For the online segment of the campaign, we incorporated not only negative scenarios into the animations but also positive ones as well. These give us hope that there are still more "good bare feet" than there are "bad combat boots" worn by oppressors,"* explains the campaign's creative, Matyáš Trnka.

This year's festival and its main theme, "Roads to Freedom", were also supported by the **Abakus Foundation** as a general partner. The endowment fund from Avast founders Pavel Baudiš and Eduard Kučera is aimed at devising tools for solving important and often underestimated social issues in the Czech Republic.

The Roads to Freedom category will show the struggle for freedom in both Belarus and Hong Kong

The theme of this year's One World Festival, "Roads to Freedom", also reflects this year's main thematic category of the same name. It will show documentaries from countries with undemocratic regimes and areas where minority rights are being suppressed. These films cast a spotlight on the important social upheavals that are currently taking place in these countries and give the people who are forced to deal with them a voice. One such film is that of Russian director and producer Vera Krichevskaya entitled **F@ck This Job**. It takes viewers behind the scenes of the only independent television station in Russia, Dožd'; and through its founder and main protagonist, Natalya Sindeyeva, it shows the effects of Putin's government on Russian media outlets. The film **Voice** by Director Nadzeya Zaitsava captures how a person's life can be turned upside down after they join anti-government protests in Belarus. The personal confession of a young woman who underwent interrogation, detention, and eventually an unimaginable escape from the country, shows the current events in Lukashenko's Belarus in an intimate light. Anti-government protests are also captured in **When a City Rises**, a documentary by a team of Hong Kong directors. Through the stories of five young people, the film records the dramatic course of events that played out in 2019 and 2020 when university students protested *en masse* for freedom and democracy in Hong Kong. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, directors Phil Grabsky and Shoaib Sharifi began watching seven-year-old Mira, who lives with his family in a cave in central Afghanistan. Through a unique personal story, they managed to capture important moments and developments in this fascinating country between 2001 and 2021 in their film **My Childhood, My Country: 20 Years in Afghanistan**.

In addition to the **Roads to Freedom** category, the festival will also include **three annual competition** categories (Czech Competition, International Competition, and Right to Know) plus seven other thematic categories, including virtual reality. For most of them, the organisers are planning post-screening discussions with festival guests and they hope at least



some of them will be able to come to Prague in person. Also returning to One World for a fifth time is the program of extended debates known as **Talking Cinema**. This program will bring important figures and experts in various fields to Prague, and their appearances will be accompanied by screenings of select films. Journalist **Frederik Obermaier**, who also appears in the film **Behind the Headlines** as a main protagonist, will talk about the work of investigative journalists at the largest German daily newspaper, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, who for the first time ever let a camera in for a peek into their work behind the scenes. **Mary L. Gray**, an anthropologist who deals with new technologies, will talk about the gig economy, which is beginning to transform the labour market. She will also cover treatment of employees and the problems and causes associated with the gig economy phenomenon.

One World in festival cities all across the country

An integral part of One World Festival are its regional parts, which make the festival accessible not only to audiences in Prague, but also to audiences in other cities across Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. The festival will kick off with public screenings for the public on 21 March in Hradec Králové, Opava, and Ústí nad Labem. Twenty-one other cities, including Prague, will gradually join them.

One World Online with films about People in Need

Last year, the festival introduced its own VOD platform, One World Online, which runs the best documentaries from previous festival years. Starting in the beginning of February, viewers will find a selection of films related to the history of People in Need, which in 2022 is celebrating its thirtieth anniversary.

Once the festival finishes with its physical format in cinemas, a number of select films from this year will be made available to watch on www.jedensvetonline.cz from 3 to 17 April. Thanks to the platform, the festival can also reach visitors who, for whatever reason, were unable to attend screenings in one of the festival cities and can view a selection of this year's films from the comfort of their own home - or from anywhere in the Czech Republic.

We will unveil the festival's program and list of international and Czech guests at a press conference on Wednesday, 2 March 2022. You will soon receive an invitation from us by e-mail.

Further information, including this year's visuals, can be downloaded at www.oneworld.cz

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