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**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **TORONTO HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH FILM FESTIVAL SPOTLIGHTS HARROWING STORIES OF ADVERSITY AND INSPIRING STORIES OF RESISTANCE**

**Filmmakers Jennifer Baichwal & Nicholas de Pencier to be honoured by festival on opening night**

**TORONTO** — TIFF® and Human Rights Watch will co-present the 16th annual Toronto Human Rights Watch Film Festival with a bold new lineup of films that spotlight global crises and provide a platform to expose stories that have long been hidden in the shadows. The films present compelling and urgent narratives on topics ranging from free speech and LGBTQ+ rights to religious freedoms and the effects of censorship on democratic society.

This year's festival, running from **April 3 to 10, 2019** at TIFF Bell Lightbox, features seven powerful films from nine countries: Brazil, France, Germany, China (Hong Kong), Malaysia, Singapore, Spain, Taiwan, and the United States. Four of the seven films were directed or co-directed by women. Most screenings will be accompanied by discussions with filmmakers, Human Rights Watch researchers, or subject-matter experts, to spark conversations around the challenging issues featured in the films and to add important context.

At this year's Opening Night, Human Rights Watch honours and pays tribute to trailblazers and award-winning filmmakers **Jennifer Baichwal** and **Nicholas de Pencier** at the festival's opening reception. Berlin Peace Film Award winner and Oscar-shortlisted documentary ***The Silence of Others*** is the Opening Night Film, which follows the victims of Francisco Franco and their ongoing fight for legal reparations against the Spanish dictator's surviving fascist henchmen.

"Sharing stories of justice and hope is critically important," said Cameron Bailey, TIFF's Artistic Director and Co-Head. "When we illuminate advocates combatting oppression around the world through films as compelling as these, we advance the conversations that help to make change."

"This year's lineup showcases essential stories, giving audiences a chance to take the story off the screen, examine the injustices, and spotlight the heroes working on these crises every day," said Helga Stephenson, Chair of the Toronto Human Rights Watch Film Festival. "Our festival offers a unique opportunity to dive deeper into these issues, aided by experts, filmmakers, and activists. It is designed not only to inspire people to join the cause, but also to help them understand how best to take action themselves. We're especially looking forward to honouring Jennifer Baichwal and Nicholas de Pencier and their critical work in the field."

Additional highlights from this year's lineup include: the TIFF 2018 selection ***Ghost Fleet***, examining the global

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fishing industry as a Thai human-rights activist, Patima Tungpuchayakul, and her team seek to bring home workers essentially enslaved at sea; the Prix Europa winner and Sundance selection ***The Cleaners***, an inside look at people hired to moderate online content for corporations and at those affected by such censorship; and the closing night film, the Tribeca selection ***Roll Red Roll***, the true story of a whistle-blowing blogger who exposed a community's complicity in a vicious crime while examining the pervasiveness of rape culture and the ways in which it must be dismantled.

The complete film lineup is listed below. Visit [tiff.net/humanrightswatch](http://tiff.net/humanrightswatch) for additional guest information leading up to the festival.

### **Opening Night**

***The Silence of Others*** Almudena Carracedo, Robert Bahar | USA/Spain | 2018

*The Silence of Others* reveals the struggle of victims of Spain's 40-year dictatorship under the fascist general Francisco Franco who continue to seek justice. Filmed over six years, it follows the survivors as they organize the groundbreaking Argentine lawsuit to fight a state-imposed amnesia of crimes against humanity, and explores a country still divided four decades into democracy. *The Silence of Others*, whose executive producers were Pedro Almodóvar, Agustín Almodóvar, and Esther García, is the second documentary feature by the Emmy-winning filmmakers Almudena Carracedo and Robert Bahar (*Made in L.A.*).

**Wednesday, April 3, 8pm**

***A Family Tour*** Ying Liang | Taiwan/Hong Kong/Singapore/Malaysia | 2018

Five years ago, the Chinese filmmaker Yang Shu made a film that offended the Chinese government. She has since been forced to remain in exile in Hong Kong. When her mother, who had been ill, suffers a relapse, Yang Shu uses the opportunity of a film festival in Taiwan to reunite her family while keeping to the strictly regulated schedule of a Chinese tour company.

**Introduced by Farida Deif, Canada Director, Human Rights Watch.**

**Thursday, April 4, 6:30pm**

***No Box for Me. An Intersex Story*** Floriane Devigne | France | 2018

Intersex is often still dealt with as a pathology that must be treated and repaired. This film reflects on the ways intersex people seek to reappropriate their bodies and construct their identities, and questions the standards our societies impose in the name of social norms.

**Introduced by Neela Ghoshal, Senior Researcher in the LGBT Rights program, Human Rights Watch**

**Friday, April 5, 6:30pm**

***Ghost Fleet*** Shannon Service, Jeffrey Waldron | USA | 2018

People normally think of slavery as a part of history. But in the global fishing industry, a modern form of slavery takes place far out at sea where no one can bear witness. A Thai human rights activist, Patima Tungpuchayakul, has led a crusade to help her country's victims and expose their conditions. In *Ghost Fleet*, viewers follow her team on a seafaring rescue mission to bring home prisoners who have spent years in captivity.

**Introduced by director Shannon Service followed by Q&A discussion**

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**Saturday, April 6, 6:30pm**

***The Cleaners*** Hans Block, Moritz Riesewieck | Germany/Brazil | 2018

Enter a shadow industry of digital cleaning, where the internet rids itself of what it doesn't like. Viewers meet five "digital scavengers," among thousands of people outsourced by Silicon Valley companies, whose job is to delete "inappropriate" web content. A typical cleaner must observe and rate thousands of often deeply disturbing images and videos every day, leading to lasting psychological impact on them. The film also introduces people around the globe whose lives are dramatically affected by online censorship. Underneath the cleaners' work lies profound questions, among them: what is the balancing point where social media is neither an unlegislated space nor a forum rife with censorship? *The Cleaners* struggles to come to terms with this new and disconcerting paradigm, charting the rise and fall of social media's utopian ideology from a shared vision of a global village to a web of fake news and radicalization.

**Sunday, April 7, 4pm**

***Life Without Basketball*** Tim O'Donnell, Jon Mercer | USA | 2018

Bilqis Abdul-Qaadir broke records and barriers on her way to becoming the first Division I basketball player to wear a hijab during games. When a controversial ban on religious headgear ends her chances at playing professionally, she is forced to re-examine her faith and identity as a Muslim American. Abdul-Qaadir lost her dream of playing professional basketball because of the ban – but now millions of girls in Muslim-majority countries can play basketball because of her successful fight to overturn it.

**Introduced by Minky Worden, Director of Global Initiatives, Human Rights Watch and Basketball player and founder of Muslim Girls Hoop Too, Bilqis Abdul-Qaadir**

**Tuesday, April 9, 6:30pm**

### **Closing Night**

***Roll Red Roll*** Nancy Schwartzman | USA | 2018

*Roll Red Roll* is a true-crime documentary that goes beyond the headlines to uncover the deep-seated, social media-fueled "boys will be boys" culture at the root of high-school sexual assault in America.

**Introduced by Liesl Gertholtz, Deputy Executive Director for Program and Executive Director of the Women's Rights Program, Human Rights Watch**

**Wednesday, April 10, 6:30pm**

Tickets for the Human Rights Watch Film Festival go on sale on **February 20** for TIFF Members and **February 27** for the public. Tickets to regular film screenings are \$9.75 for Members and \$14 for the public. Purchase tickets online at [tiff.net/humanrightswatch](http://tiff.net/humanrightswatch) or by phone from 10am to 7pm ET daily at 416.599.TIFF or 1.888.599.8433, or visit the Steve & Rashmi Gupta Box Office in person from 10am to 10pm ET daily at TIFF Bell Lightbox, Reitman Square, 350 King Street West.

TIFF prefers Visa.

For more information on the Opening Night fundraising reception, or to purchase tickets for the event, Human Rights Watch can be contacted directly at 416.322.8448 or [thornta@hrw.org](mailto:thornta@hrw.org). Single tickets are \$250, which

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includes the reception and entrance to the Opening Night screening.

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**About TIFF**

TIFF is a charitable cultural organization whose mission is to transform the way people see the world through film. An international leader in film culture, TIFF projects include the annual Toronto International Film Festival in September; TIFF Bell Lightbox, which features five cinemas, major exhibitions, and learning and entertainment facilities; and innovative national distribution program Film Circuit. The organization generates an annual economic impact of \$189 million CAD. TIFF Bell Lightbox is generously supported by contributors including Founding Sponsor Bell, the Province of Ontario, the Government of Canada, the City of Toronto, the Reitman family (Ivan Reitman, Agi Mandel and Susan Michaels), The Daniels Corporation and RBC. For more information, visit [tiff.net](http://tiff.net).

**About Human Rights Watch**

Human Rights Watch is one of the world’s leading independent organizations dedicated to defending and protecting human rights. By focusing international attention where human rights are violated, we give voice to the oppressed and hold oppressors accountable for their crimes. Our rigorous, objective investigations and strategic, targeted advocacy build intense pressure for action and raise the cost of human rights abuse. For over 30 years, Human Rights Watch has worked tenaciously to lay the legal and moral groundwork for deep-rooted change and has fought to bring greater justice and security to people around the world.

**TIFF is generously supported by Lead Sponsor Bell, Major Sponsors RBC, L’Oréal Paris, and Visa, and Major Supporters the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario, and the City of Toronto.**

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For more information, contact Rebecca Silver at [rsilver@tiff.net](mailto:rsilver@tiff.net), or the Communications Department at 416.934.3200, or email [proffice@tiff.net](mailto:proffice@tiff.net).

For images visit the media site at [tiff.net/press](http://tiff.net/press).

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