

Revoke the Sentences Against the Iranian Filmmakers Jafar Panahi und Mohammad Rassoulov immediately!

This is a first: two film directors have been handed down harsh sentences, not for actually making a critical film, but simply because they had intended to make a film. Because the Iranian government assumed it would not like the film Jafar Panahi und Mohammad Rassoulov were planning to make, it has sentenced the two directors to six years in jail and imposed a twenty-year ban on their practicing their profession, traveling, and giving interviews.

The working conditions for artists, journalists, and human rights activists in Iran have been extremely difficult for a long time. Nevertheless, this form of censorship is new and has shocked colleagues fighting within the country and elsewhere for the right to be respected as responsible and autonomous individuals. The Paris-based Iranian film director Rafi Pitts is one of the many people who have demanded that the sentence be revoked immediately. In order to underline his commitment to getting the directors freed he has called in an open letter for a two-hour strike on February 11, 2011, the thirty-second anniversary of the Iranian revolution. Between 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. CET on that day people of all nations and political affiliations are being asked to down tools as a gesture of solidarity with Jafar Panahi and Mohammad Rassoulov.

As media representatives we, too, strongly protest against the action taken by the Iranian justice authorities and the Iranian government and demand that the sentence be revoked immediately.

In solidarity with the filmmakers and all critical minds in Iran we colored our websites green and inform our public about the current situation in Iran.