

2024 Ajyal Announces Winners of Ajyal Jury Competition, Made in Qatar and 'Ajyal in Gaza' Awards

- **12th Edition of the Festival Marks its Transition to the 2025 Doha Film Festival**

Doha, Qatar; November 23, 2024: The 12th edition of the Ajyal Film Festival, presented by Doha Film Institute (DFI), concluded today with the winners of the Ajyal Jury Competition honoured at a special ceremony held in Katara Cultural Village, Doha.

The Ajyal Jury Competition winners were selected by over 400 young jurors, aged 8 to 25, who watched a total of 66 thought-provoking films from 42 countries in three categories – Mohaq (8 to 12 years), Hilal (13 to 17 years) and Bader (18- to 25-year-old jurors). The award ceremony was attended by jurors, their parents, filmmakers and several distinguished guests.

One of the special moments at the Festival this year was the 'Ajyal in Gaza' programme that screened films from Qatar for 90 young jurors in Gaza, who awarded ***Above the Tamarind Tree*** (Qatar) by Buthyna Al Mohammadi the top honour.

The Made in Qatar Awards, which honour the works of Qatari and Qatar-based filmmakers, were evaluated by a three-member jury led by acclaimed Palestinian actor Saleh Bakri and included Kenyan filmmaker Debra Aroko and Qatari filmmaker Amal Al Muftah. The winners are:

- **Abdulaziz Jassim Award for Best Performance:** Qatari filmmaker Ali Al-Hajri - *I Lay For You To Sleep*.
- **Best Director Award:** Paul Abraham and Abdulla Al-Hor- *Alkaline*
- **Best Film Award:** *I Lay For You To Sleep* - Ali Al-Hajri

The winners of the 2024 Ajyal Jury Competition are:

Mohaq:

- **Best Short Film Award:** *Bottles* (Morocco) - Yassine El Idrissi
- **Best Feature Film Award:** *Block 5* (Slovenia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Serbia)- Klemen Dvornik

Hilal:

- **Best Short Film Award:** *Canary in a Coal Mine* (Lebanon) - Dwan Kaoukji
- **Best Feature Film Award:** *Searching for Amani* (Kenya, USA)- Debra Aroko and Nicole Gormley

Bader:

- **Best Short Film Award:** *Apoleon* (Egypt, France) - Amir Youssef
- **Best Feature Film Award:** *Thank You for Banking with Us* (Palestine, Germany, KSA, Qatar, Egypt) - Laila Abbas
- **Audience Award:** *Sudan, Remember Us* (France, Tunisia, Qatar) - Hind Meddeb.

Addressing the audience, Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Festival Director and Chief Executive Officer of DFI, said: “While we hosted our screenings here, our hearts were with our neighbours who are undergoing great challenges. When 90 young jurors in Gaza found a way to participate in Ajyal despite everything happening around them, it showed me the true power of what we do. Their courage and determination to engage with cinema even in the darkest hours, reminds us of our purpose. It tells us why we can never stop telling stories of the wronged and the neglected.”

She added, “We have been inspired by how filmmakers respond to the changes around them. Through our support to young, emerging and independent voices, we have underlined the power of film to break barriers and form positive bonds through cultural exchange and understanding.”

With DFI approaching its 15th year in 2025 Alremaihi commented, “As we look ahead to a new chapter with Doha Film Festival, the Ajyal spirit remains. Our young jurors have always been the driving force behind the festival, and they will to be central to next year’s exciting new chapter in film and storytelling. Ajyal means generations, and what we have built together is a legacy for future generations. We told a magnificent story and we are about to tell another filled with hope and excitement, and will continue to champion the voices of underrepresented communities.”

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About Doha Film Institute

Doha Film Institute is an independent, not-for-profit cultural organisation. It supports the growth of the Arab film community through cultivating film appreciation, enhancing industry knowledge and contributing to the development of sustainable creative industries in Qatar and the region. The Institute’s platforms include funding and production of local, regional and international films; skills-sharing and mentorship programmes; film screenings; the Ajyal Film Festival; and Qumra. With culture, community, learning and entertainment at its foundation, the Institute is committed to supporting Qatar’s 2030 vision for the development of a knowledge-based economy.

About Ajyal Film Festival

Ajyal Film Festival is an annual celebration of film designed to nurture young minds and support the development of mindful global citizens and thoughtful future leaders. ‘Ajyal’, Arabic for ‘generations’, builds on the Institute’s history of community-based programming, and brings people of all ages together through screenings and events that inspire creative interaction and stimulate cinematic dialogue. Through its’ jury

programme, youth between the ages of 8 and 25 are given an opportunity to watch, analyse and discuss global cinema and culture, developing self-confidence, independent critical thinking skills, self-expression, and an appreciation of cinema, while making new friends and discovering global cultures.

Doha Film Institute:

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