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## SNAPSHOT Film Festival Opens Human Rights Dialogue

A film festival facilitates the discussion of human rights in a post-revolution Libya.



*The National Awareness Movement hosted a four-day documentary film festival for over 1,000 Libyans on the importance of human rights.*

*"[The] festival of films about human rights... broke new ground culturally, politically, and socially."*

--The Economist, 2012

### Telling Our Story

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**November 2012** – *What does “human rights” mean? More importantly, what does it mean to me?*

These questions are being posed by groups like the National Awareness Movement (NAM), a Tripoli-based group of young activists that encourages debate and dialogue on the importance of human rights and the role it must play in Libya’s transition. Using film as a creative medium to bring people together, NAM screened six films on human rights to over 1,000 in Tripoli with the support from USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives, November 1 - 4, 2012.

Opening night of the festival was a full house, attended by foreign embassy officials as well as representatives of the Libyan government and General National Congress. The audience of the first screening gave positive feedback and requested an encore showing of “A Man’s Shadow,” one of the featured films about women speaking their minds. The event was highly publicized and covered by about two dozen media outlets including Al Jazeera, Reuters, and The Associated Press.

The festival launched with documentaries on Libya, but also included films on human rights in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, UAE, Turkey, and Italy. The films personalized the issue of human rights and sparked open conversation on global human rights in a safe environment. In a peaceful dialogue on the second day, participants discussed methods to ensure basic human rights are protected in Libya.

On the third day, activists and experts led discussions on women’s rights and the rights of the disabled. The Libyan Minister of Justice, Salah Almarghany, sat as a panelist, acknowledging the presence of human rights abuses in Libya, saying it is “what is stalling the victory of the Libyan revolution.” The event was the first of growing efforts to raise awareness on the importance of human rights in Libya. Many participants of the film festival stated that the event helped them to identify a violation of human rights when they see one, to realize that the language of human rights is universal, and to begin to look at the examples of others as the first step to finding a solution for Libya.

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