

## Toronto Palestine Film Festival

October 25-November 1, 2008  
102A-1075 Bay St., Ste 148  
Toronto, ON M5S 2B2



### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Palestine Film Festival Opens to Packed Audience at Bloor Cinema; Suheir Hammad, Bashar Da'as, Danny Glover at Opening Reception

Toronto, October 26 – The inaugural Toronto Palestine Film Festival (TPFF) opened to a packed audience last night. Enthusiastic crowds came to see the Canadian premiere of Annemarie Jacir's critically acclaimed *Salt of this Sea*, the first film written and directed by a Palestinian woman. Rafeef Ziadah, an organizing committee member, welcomed the 850 people in attendance by expressing that "On the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba, we are happy to bring the spirit of Palestine to theatres across Toronto for the next week."

Acclaimed poet Suheir Hammad, who plays the lead role of Soraya in *Salt of this Sea*, introduced the film, stating that "I want people to see this movie as representing a part of the Palestinian experience; to see us as beautiful, complex individuals. I want people to see themselves in our stories. This is for the girls who've felt marginalized, and the indigenous people of Canada who continue to live as second class citizens in their own homeland." The successful screening was followed by an engaging Q&A with Suheir Hammad and members of the audience.

Special guests celebrated the successful opening at a gala reception held after the film. Guests were treated to a pre-screening of Min Sook Lee's *Sedition*. In attendance, were Suheir Hammad, along with actors Danny Glover and Bashar Da'as, along with a number of other prominent Torontonians active in the local media and arts scene. Farid Ayad, president of Palestine House, warmly welcomed the guests and thanked the TPFF organizing committee for their dedication and incredible work in putting together a successful opening.

Conceived by Palestine House to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Nakba, the 1948 mass expulsion of Palestinians from their ancestral lands, TPFF evolved from a number of successful screenings of Palestinian films in the GTA over the years. The festival continues throughout the week with over 30 screenings, including 25 Canadian premieres. The festival concludes on November 1<sup>st</sup> with the Canadian premiere of *Slingshot Hip Hop*. The director of the film, Jackie Reem Salloum, will be in attendance for the closing night of the festival. She will also speak on a panel entitled "Palestinian Cinema and Cultural Resistance" at the William Doo Auditorium at the University of Toronto. Tickets can still be purchased online @ [www.tpff.ca](http://www.tpff.ca), at the Women's Bookstore (73 Harbord Street), and Palestine House (3195 Erindale Station Road). Other highlights over the week include a screening and discussion with members of Al-Haq (Palestinian human rights organization) on the documentary they produced, *Memory of the Cactus*, about the creation of Canada Park on the remnants of three destroyed Palestinian villages.

[www.tpff.ca](http://www.tpff.ca)

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