

***No Other Land*, exposing Israeli settlers' military criminality, wins awards at International Documentary Association ceremony in Los Angeles—but still no distributor in the US!**

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At the 40th International Documentary Association (IDA) awards in Los Angeles December 5, *No Other Land*, a scathing indictment of Zionist repression and violence in the illegally Occupied West Bank, received three major awards.

However, the film distribution network, also headquartered in the same city, has refused to see to it that the work is actually shown to the public in the US. This is an explicit act of acquiescing to pro-Israeli intimidation and objectively covering up massive, world-historical crimes.

The film is directed by an Israeli-Palestinian team of co-directors, Basel Adra, Hamdan Ballal, Rachel Szor and Yuval Abraham. As the WSWs explained earlier this year, when the film screened to great success (and vicious attacks from the German establishment) at the Berlin film festival, *No Other Land*

recounts the brutal expulsion of Palestinian villagers from Masafer Yatta, a settlement of 19 villages south of Hebron in the West Bank.

The directors

convey the harrowing events intimately and in real time. They film everything they experience, exchange material with each other, try to spread it via social media and gain attention in the international media. They are compelled to protect themselves from the aggressive actions of the Israeli army and the fascistic settler militias allied with it.

Friends and relatives help repeatedly to hide them and their footage.

Anyone who opposes the eviction of the Palestinians from their land

is mercilessly attacked. Adra's cousin is one of those. He initially survives, but is paralyzed. In a cave, he lies on a mattress on the ground, guarded day and night by his desperate mother. His fate triggers significant protests by his friends and the villagers. They demand medical help, but there is no place in a health care facility, and the family's house and beds are destroyed. He ultimately dies, as the film reveals at the end.

After the eviction of the Palestinian inhabitants, the [Israeli] bulldozers come and demolish everything people need to live—their houses, their furniture, lamps, electrical equipment, sheep and chicken sheds, the power supply, roads. Shocking footage shows the destruction of a modern, well-kept bathroom by a bulldozer, followed by two or three Israeli soldiers cutting the water pipe with a saw. ...

The refugees find refuge in nearby caves, which date back to ancient times, with the few belongings and blankets they were able to salvage. Without water and electricity, they try to manage in the most primitive conditions, collecting wood for heating and cooking.

Finally, the Israeli occupiers also destroy the

school that the villagers built themselves after their school buses were repeatedly attacked and stopped on the way to the next town.

At the IDA ceremony Thursday held in the Orpheum Theater, the co-directors of *No Other Land* first received the Pare Lorentz Courage Under Fire award in recognition of the dangerous and arduous conditions under which the film was shot. *No Other Land*'s filmmakers proceeded to collect the award for best director and, the top prize, for best feature documentary.

Basel Adra and Yuval Abraham, unable to attend the event, sent video messages in response to the various honors bestowed on the four directors. They referred to the film as "an act of creative resistance." They explained that "conditions prevent us from being with you tonight," but that "our team" had begun working on the film five years ago.

Adra and Abraham expressed gratitude and satisfaction for receiving the multiple honors, some of the most prestigious in the world of non-fiction filmmaking, "despite the darkness that we're living today." They indicated that "things are only getting worse" and that the recognition for their film from the IDA helped give them strength "to continue the struggle against the occupation."

Tellingly, Adra and Abraham referred obliquely to the fact that *No Other Land* had no distributor in America. "A film like ours is not so easy to get it shown in the US," remarked Abraham, a film "critical of the occupation." He added, "We really hope it reaches people in the United States."

There is of course no innocent explanation for the film's failure to be shown in the US. It is a brazen act of political censorship.

No Other Land won out at the IDA awards over dozens of other films. The IDA itself noted that the organization had

received more than 700 entries from 77 countries, an increase over last year both in the total number of entries and the countries represented. IDA Documentary Awards entries were reviewed by jurors consisting of 300 documentary professionals from more than 40 countries.

Deadline noted that Thursday it had been

an extraordinary week for *No Other Land*, the timely documentary directed by a collective of Israeli

and Palestinian filmmakers. *No Other Land* swept most of the awards announced this week: on Monday, it won Best Documentary at the Gotham Awards, and on Tuesday, the New York Film Critics Circle named it the best documentary of the year. It won the National Board of Review Freedom of Expression Award on Wednesday, although *Sugarcane* won the NBR's prize for Best Documentary.

And yet there is no US distribution.

On *IndieWire*, Chris O'Falt pointed out that

This fall, dozens of great movies were showcased at the top film festivals across the globe, and many of those that screened at Venice, Telluride, Toronto, New York, and AFI Fest will shape the awards season over the next three months. The very best reviewed of these (higher on Metacritic than *The Brutalist*, *Anora*, and *Nickel Boys*, or any other documentary that premiered) is *No Other Land*, a film that would appear destined for an Oscar nomination for Best Documentary. If only it could find a distributor.

O'Falt, writing in November, referred to the week-long screening of *No Other Land* at Lincoln Center in New York then partway through.

Each of the four remaining screenings at Lincoln Center...are sold out. A sign the film is not only timely, but is registering with more than just critics. It's a powerful combination for a distributor with guts.



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