

EXECUTIVE PRODUCED BY  
ACADEMY AWARD-WINNER EMMA THOMPSON  
A FILM BY HASAN OSWALD



# MEDIHA

مديحة

LOVEWORLD MEDIA PRESENTS A RHINO FILMS AND ENDERBY ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION "MEDIHA" A FILM BY HASAN OSWALD  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCED BY EMMA THOMPSON, BETSY STAHL, RICK DUGDALE, HÅKAN KARLSSON, JOYCE PIERPOLINE, JASON LOFTUS  
PRODUCED BY HASAN OSWALD, ANNELISE MECCA, FAHRINISA CAMPANA, ALEXANDER SPIESS, STEPHEN NEMETH  
EDITING KAITLYN PLUM ORIGINAL SCORE HENRY BLOOMFIELD COLOR TYLER HAWES AUDIO DESIGN KENNETH SKOGLUND

## LOVEWORLD MEDIA PRESENTS

Production Type ..... Documentary Feature Film  
Director..... Hasan Oswald  
Producers..... Hasan Oswald, Annelise Mecca, Fahrinisa Campana,  
Alexander Spiess, Stephen Nemeth  
Exec. Prod..... Emma Thompson, Rick Dugdale, Joyce Pierpoline, Hakan Karlsson,  
Jason Loftus  
Editor..... Kaitlyn Plum  
Runtime..... 90 min  
Language..... Kurdish, Turkish, Arabic, English  
Country of Origin..... United States  
Country of Filming..... Iraq, Turkey, Syria  
Format..... 3840x2160, 23.98fps, 1:1.78 (16:9) color, Sound 5.1  
PR..... Susan Norget Film Promotion - susan@norget.com  
Distribution..... Pending

[Website](#) | [IMDB](#) | [Instagram](#) |





WORLD PREMIERE **DOC NYC 2023**  
CO-PRESENTED BY  
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## **LOGLINE**

Mediha, a teenage Yazidi girl who has recently returned from ISIS captivity, turns her camera on herself to process her trauma while rescuers search for her missing family members. This is the story of the Yazidi genocide and its aftermath, shown through the lens of one young survivor as she confronts her past through personal video-diaries, reclaiming her voice and stepping bravely towards the future.



## BACKGROUND

In 2014, ISIS committed genocide against the Yazidis, a small religious and ethnic minority in Northern Iraq. Men and the elderly were executed and dumped into mass graves, while many boys were trained to become child soldiers. Women and girls were forced into sexual slavery, repeatedly sold and traded among ISIS soldiers.

Those who survived the genocide and have remained in the region are still unable to return to their ancestral homeland due to the continued unrest and destruction of their homes, farmlands and businesses. The Yazidis now face the enormous task of trying to rebuild their communities, as they search for their missing and for justice.

I need a...





# SYNOPSIS

Having survived kidnapping and enslavement by ISIS, Mediha and her younger brothers, Ghazwan and Adnan, must now attempt to rebuild their lives with the whereabouts of their father, mother and baby brother unknown. Faced by local and international complexities, which continue to affect rescue and accountability efforts eight years after the genocide, the siblings must turn to a network of Yazidi rescuers in the search for their missing family members.

The story takes place over three years, across Iraq, Turkey and Syria, highlighting the ongoing and long-lasting impact of ISIS atrocities. Mediha takes us on her quest for justice, confronting her trauma and pain through personal video-diaries, and reclaiming her voice by initiating investigations into her perpetrator.







# APPROACH

While many documentaries are told through the prism of aid workers, humanitarians and journalists from the outside looking in, this project aims to give a platform to those directly affected by the crisis.

Over the last three years, we've taken the approach that the best people to tell the story about the Yazidi genocide and its aftermath are the Yazidis themselves.

For this reason, we taught the siblings the basics of cinematography and provided them cameras — many vignettes throughout the film were captured by Mediha, with additional footage done by Ghazwan and Adnan. By having Mediha film their life, we're able to learn their story through the perspective of the siblings themselves, through video diaries and unfiltered footage of their daily routines.

Since Mediha has been equipped with the means to express herself, she also able to regain some semblance of agency over her life she shares stories from her tragic past as well as dreams of a future in which her and her siblings captors are held to account.

Director Hasan Oswald supplements the family's self-filmed journey with intimate single-camera vérité as he worked closely with the siblings over the course of three years.





## CONSENT

When we first set out to make this film, it wasn't long before we realized that it wasn't only going to be *about* Mediha—it was going to be a joint project in collaboration *with* Mediha. Subsequently, we were able to use this medium for self-representation, transparently addressing the balance of power between filmmaker and subject while refusing to simply be conduits for information transfer or entertainment.

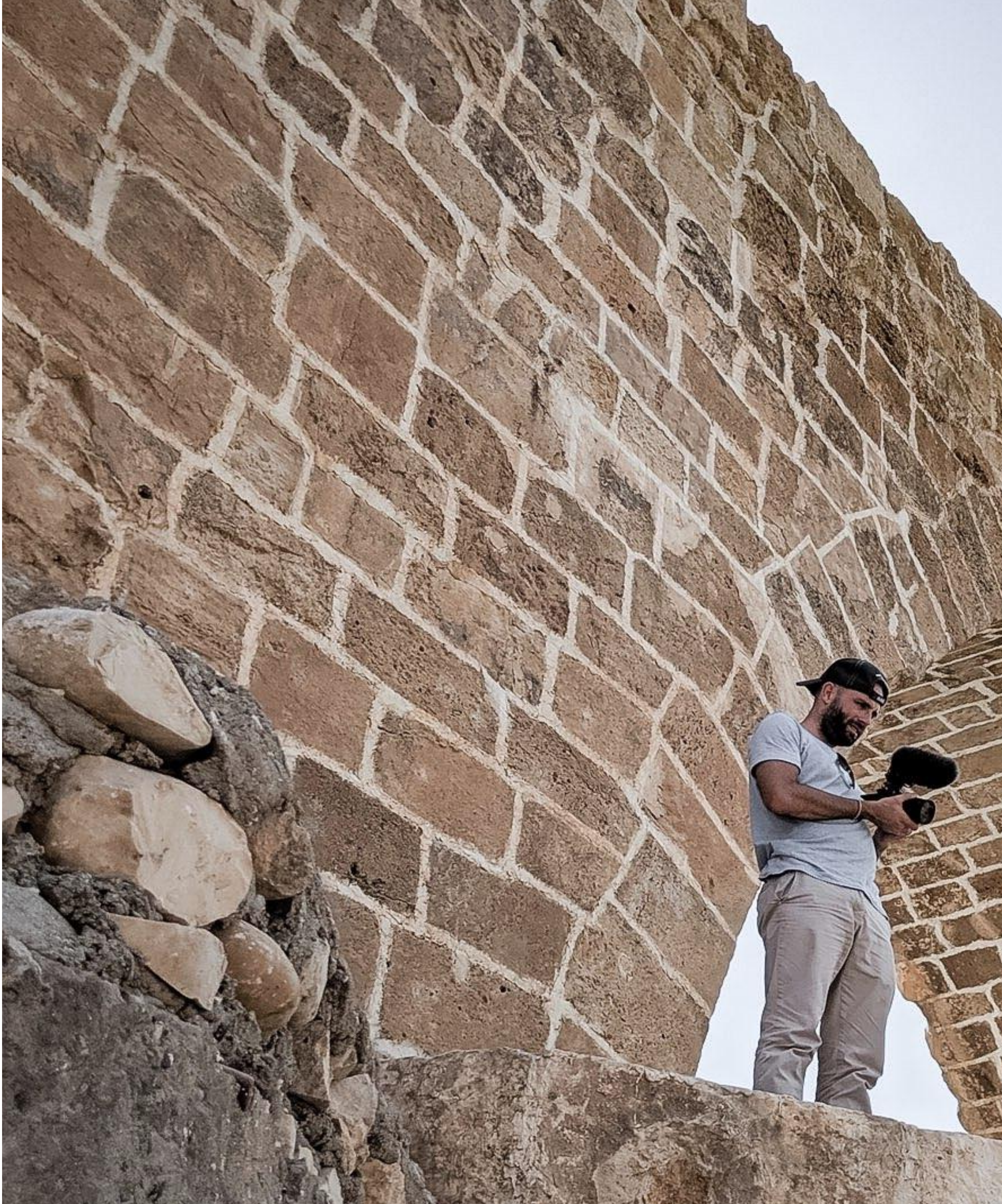
Committing to this unique subject-driven approach, we handed the camera over to Mediha, allowing her to drive the narrative herself while giving her the tools and a platform to tell a story which she has, until now, been unable to share.

Mediha's well-being and agency are and have always been paramount. We speak daily with her as we continue to answer her questions about consent, festivals, and preparation for the release of the film worldwide.

We have discussed potential dangers with Mediha and her family from the start, and they are fully aware of what they signed up for in the making of this film. They are passionate about sharing their story despite the potential risks, and we will continue to take actions to mitigate any dangers and ensure that their story is heard.

We are keenly aware that we are revisiting trauma in a community that has been continually terrorized. We have therefore prioritized handling this story with the sensitivity, intentionality and empathy it requires in order to avoid further damage. The opportunity to work with Mediha has been an absolute honor. Her trust in our collaboration is what made this film what it is today.





# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As a filmmaker and storyteller, I have always gravitated towards complex characters -- each with varied experiences and perspectives -- who have been let down by their own communities or society at large.

I have also been captivated by certain world events, like the Syrian civil war, the drug epidemic in the US, and the ISIS genocide of the Yazidi people. All of these events have changed our world in undeniable ways, and have led me to places and people I never expected to encounter.

In 2019, I was in Iraq reporting on the Yazidi genocide through the traditional lens of documentary film. But when I met Mediha -- who had recently returned from ISIS captivity to a culture and community she could barely remember -- I realized that I had to tell this story through her eyes. It was, in fact, her story to tell. I therefore abandoned the usual sit-down interviews with geo-political experts and politicians and handed the camera over to Mediha.

Committing to this unique subject-driven approach, Mediha and I set out to make a film together.

Using her video diaries and pure, slice-of-life scene work, she speaks of the atrocities committed against her and her people for the first time and, in so doing, regains some semblance of agency.

As her partner in this project, I feel a deep responsibility to Mediha to help her share her story with the world and, in turn, refocus the spotlight onto the seemingly forgotten Yazidi plight.



# DIRECTOR

## HASAN OSWALD

Since the start of his filmmaking career, Hasan Oswald has demonstrated an ability to capture the human experience through verité cinema. His unfettered access to and intimacy with his subjects create a seamless veneer between the filmmaker and subject that heightens the immediacy and personal nature of his storytelling.

He has covered the water crisis in Flint, Michigan (Forgotten USA), drug trafficking and homelessness in Camden, NJ (Higher Love), and the international diaspora of conflict refugees for NatGeo (Hell on Earth).

This latest documentary, *MEDIHA*, follows a teenage Yazidi girl processing her trauma after being held captive by ISIS. *MEDIHA* won the Grand Jury Award, and Audience Award (runner-up) at Doc NYC 2023. Hasan was also named one of Doc NYC's 40 under 40 documentary rising stars to watch, co-presented by HBO Documentary Films.





# PRODUCERS

## **HASAN OSWALD (DIRECTOR)**

Hasan is coming off his feature directorial debut with the documentary *Higher Love*, about a blue-collar worker who tries to rescue his pregnant, heroin-addicted girlfriend from the notorious streets of Camden, NJ. The film won nine international festival awards in 2020, including the Slamdance Grand Jury award. He directed the short *Refugees Welcome*, about the refugee crisis in Lesbos, Greece, and previously worked in the Middle East on National Geographic's *Hell on Earth: The Fall of Syria and the Rise of ISIS*.

## **ANNELISE MECCA**

Annelise is a documentary photographer and photojournalist — with a MSc in International Development — focusing on issues of migration and post-war refugee situations. She partners with organizations in refugee camps worldwide on communications campaigns. She has also worked for CNN, History Channel, Discovery, and the E.W. Scripps Foundation.

## **STEPHEN NEMETH**

Stephen has produced dozens of films, including *The Sessions* and *Fear And Loathing In Las Vegas*. He is a member of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences and is on the board of numerous non-profit organizations including Friends of the Earth.

## **FAHRINISA CAMPANA**

Fahrinisa is an audio producer and multimedia reporter, a graduate of the Columbia Journalism School and a Columbia Global Migration fellow who regularly reports from the US, Europe, Turkey, India, Jordan and Iraq. Her work has been featured in National Geographic, The Guardian, NPR, PRX The World, Al Jazeera English, Vox, Slate, AJ+, BBC and CNN. She's currently a Senior Producer for Al Jazeera English Podcasts (The Take).

## **ALEXANDER SPIESS**

Alexander is a filmmaker and journalist who has worked for National Geographic, CNN, Channel 4, Peacock, A+E, Showtime, Lionsgate, History Channel, Scripps News and Goldcrest Films. He is a Columbia DuPont Award recipient for Excellence in Investigative Reporting, and most recently, with Hasan Oswald, produced *Higher Love*, which won the Grand Jury Award at Slamdance Film Festival 2020.



# EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

## EMMA THOMPSON

Emma is a British actress, screenwriter, producer, activist, author and comedian. She is a recipient of two Academy Awards, two Golden Globe Awards, two British Academy Film Awards, a British Academy Television Award and a Primetime Emmy Award. She is particularly active in human rights work.

## BETSY STAHL

Betsy has been an executive at Rhino Films since 2007 and has developed numerous film and TV projects including an adaptation of John Perkins' bestselling book *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*, an Einstein biopic and a Hunter S. Thompson/Richard Nixon road-trip comedy. She has exec-produced and co-produced documentaries as well as multiple critically acclaimed films. As an independent writer/producer, Stahl co-wrote the story and executive produced *New Line's Lost Souls*, directed by Academy Award-winning cinematographer Janusz Kaminski. Prior to producing, she worked as a consultant for National Wildlife Federation's film unit and as a development executive for production companies at MGM and Fox 2000.

## HÅKAN KARLSSON

Håkan Karlsson is a Swedish editor and producer known for *The Girl Who Kicked The Hornets Nest*, he owns the post production company People In The Park.

## JASON LOFTUS

Jason is a Peabody-winning filmmaker and four-time Canadian Screen Award nominee. He produced and directed 2022's *Eternal Spring*, the first documentary to represent Canada as its Official Submission to the Oscars® for Best International Feature. A SIMA Award winner and nominee at both the IDA Documentary Awards and Annie Awards, Jason is CEO of Toronto-based Lofty Sky Entertainment.

## JOYCE PIERPOLINE

Joyce is a producer of feature films and documentaries. She is founder of Pierpoline Films and known for producing the award-winning cult classic *Teeth*. Past production credits include *The Transfiguration* (Premiere Un Certain Regard, Cannes Film Festival), *Angelica* (Premiere Berlinale) and *Happy Tears* (Premiere Berlinale). She serves on the Executive Board of New York Women in Film and Television and on the board of BAFTA North American where she is Chair of the Film Committee.

## RICK DUGDALE

Rick is the President and CEO of Enderby Entertainment, a film finance and production company founded in 2006 by Dugdale and his filmmaking partner, Daniel Petrie, Jr. Dugdale oversees all aspects of Enderby Entertainment's business, finance and production and spearheads the company's relationships with its worldwide community of financial partners.



# CO-PRODUCERS

## **SAMI J RASHO**

Sami has known the siblings since they first arrived at the Qadiya camp in 2016/2017. He teaches English to Mediha, Ghazwan and Adnan, and serves as a leader in an organization focusing on the rehabilitation of children who have survived ISIS captivity. During production of the film, Sami has been a consistent support both to the crew and the family.

## **VIAN AHMED, THE LOTUS FLOWER**

Through Vian and Lotus Flower — an organization working with women and girls in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, affected by conflict and the 2014 ISIS genocide — our team first came into contact with the participants of this film. Lotus Flower has since been offering psychological support to the siblings as they navigate their lives post-ISIS captivity. Vian has remained in integral part of the team throughout the process.

## **NAWAL KARIM**

Nawal has been integral to the film team and to the participants in this film by conducting sensitivity and awareness training, cultural consultations and psychological support for Mediha. She has also facilitated interviews and has served as a translator and interpreter.

## **SALMAN IBRAHIM**

Salman is passionate about translation, literature, linguistics and philosophy. For the past seven years, he has worked with several international NGOs and Media in Iraq as an English trainer and translator/interpreter, including Mission East, La Croix, Le Point, the Norwegian Refugee Council, Sinjar Academy, WMD Brazil and GIZ.

# EDITOR

## **KAITLYN PLUM**

Kait is a documentary, commercial and narrative editor with over 14 years of experience in the industry. She has worked with award-winning filmmakers, Nick Quested (*Restrepo*), Bobbito Garcia (*Stretch and Bobbito: Radio That Changed Lives*), Emilia Mello (*Waste Land*), and Pulitzer winning photographer Anthony Mark Saul.



# IMPACT

Creating impact starts with creating awareness. We hope this film serves as a catalyst for awareness of the continued plight of the Yazidis. But we won't stop there — awareness is only the first step, one that leads to more opportunities for activism and social action. We have assembled a team of local and international experts, and partnered with local organizations who have helped make this impact campaign a true extension of the work and activism Mediha exhibited in this film.

Mediha is now 18 years old. She's brave and determined beyond her years and has become an advocate for her community. She has the potential to help other Yazidi women and girls in very similar circumstances, and we believe that she, a Yazidi survivor herself, is the best person to do this.

We have supported [The Lotus Flower](#), a safe space for Yazidi women and girls in Northern Iraq to receive mental health support, medical attention, sports opportunities and art programs, through programs like [Storytelling Sisters](#) — a photography program for Yazidi women and girl survivors.

It's through Mediha's participation in the film that her desire to become an advocate grew into something tangible. She saw through increased awareness how her life, and lives of women and girls in her community, could change for the better. As a result of participating in this project, Mediha has engaged in several advocacy training programs and spoken at forums like [Human Trafficking Foundation](#), [Peace and Freedom Organization](#), [Nineveh Victims Forum](#). She will be speaking again in February 2024 at [Yazidi Law Conference in Amsterdam](#). Through Mediha, we have been able to connect with and support rescue organizations like [Joint Help for Kurdistan](#), who is also featured in the film.

Mediha and her three brothers have been active participants in this film from day one, and want to ensure their participation does not go unnoticed or unrewarded. Each of the four children dream of a better life and better educational opportunities and we hope that through our impact campaign and funding, we will be able to provide them with this.

We will also be partnering with [Perspective Fund](#) to help us reach our goals.

\*THIS FILM IS FISCALLY SPONSORED BY INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY ASSOCIATION (IDA),



DIRECTED, PRODUCED & WRITTEN  
BY  
**HASAN OSWALD**

CINEMATOGRAPHY  
**HASAN OSWALD**  
**MEDIHA ALHAMAD**

PRODUCED BY  
**ANNELISE MECCA**  
**FAHRINISA CAMPANA**

PRODUCED BY  
**ALEXANDER SPIESS**  
**STEPHEN NEMETH**

ORIGINAL SCORE BY  
**HENRY BLOOMFIELD**

EDITED BY  
**KAITLYN PLUM**

ADDITIONAL EDITING  
**HASAN OSWALD**

EXECUTIVE PRODUCED BY  
**EMMA THOMPSON**  
**RICK DUGDALE**  
**HÅKAN KARLSSON**  
**JOYCE PIERPOLINE**  
**JASON LOFTUS**

CO-PRODUCED BY  
**MURAD HUSSEIN**  
**SAMI JUKO RASHO**  
**SALMAN IBRAHIM OSO**  
**NAWAL KAREEM DINO**  
**PETER GOETZ**

CO-CINEMATOGRAPHY  
**ANNELISE MECCA**

ADDITIONAL  
CINEMATOGRAPHY  
**FAHRINISA CAMPANA**  
**GHAZWAN IBRAHIM ALHAMAD**  
**ADNAN IBRAHIM ALHAMAD**

