



17<sup>th</sup> International Film Festival and Forum  
on Human Rights

# FIFDH Geneva 8-17 March 2019

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**PRESS RELEASE**  
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### The FIFDH 2019 opens tomorrow in Geneva

The 17<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights (FIFDH) opens tomorrow in Geneva, in the presence of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights **Michelle Bachelet** and the Swiss Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs **Pascale Baeriswyl**.

At a time when human rights are suffering an unprecedented setback and multilateral institutions are under attack on a daily basis, the FIFDH is highlighting citizen engagement and resistance during 200 events in 62 locations in Greater Geneva and French-speaking Switzerland.

In parallel with the main session of the UN Human Rights Council, 300 speakers from all over the world will testify, denounce and exchange with the public.

#### Women changing the world

"For the first time, the majority of protagonists in our selection are women. They are strong women, women who, despite an unsustainable context, rise up, become actors in their lives, and often act alone to make a difference," says Isabelle Gattiker, Director General and Director of FIFDH programmes.

Tomorrow, 8 March, International Women's Rights Day, the Festival will dedicate its opening evening to women human rights defenders. After the screening of Alexandria Bombach's film *On Her Shoulders*, dedicated to the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize winner Nadia Murad, the Festival will welcome activists **Sareta Ashraph**, **Tetiana Pechonchyk** and **Hajer Sharief**.

Among the 300 guests of the Festival, the public will also have the opportunity to listen and exchange with author **Leïla Slimani**, President of the Documentary Jury, the activist and former President of CNN Productions **Pat Mitchell**, President of the Fiction Jury, actress **Aïssa Maïga**, feminist professor and activist **Ratna Kapur**, journalists **Nadia Daam**, **Lyse Doucet** (BBC) and **Lénaïg Bredoux**, sociologist **Saskia Sassen**, scientist and founder of the website Sci-Hub **Alexandra Elbakyan**, international President of Doctors Without Borders **Joanne Liu**, Brazilian activist **Ludmilla Teixeira**, Syrian activist **Sara Mardini** and former Swiss President **Ruth Dreifuss**.

Other FIFDH guests include actor **Forest Whitaker**, web inventor **Tim Berners-Lee**, authors **Roberto Saviano** (who will speak by videoconference) and Uzodinma Iweala, as well as artist **Ai Weiwei** and World Health Organization (WHO) Director **Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**.

The writer **Édouard Louis** will close this edition on Sunday, March 17.

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