



GROTE JURYPRIJS
Venetië Filmfestival

THE VOICE OF HIND RAJAB

صوت هند رجب

EEN FILM VAN
KAOUTHER BEN HANIA



cinéart

PERSMAP



GROTE JURYPRIJS
Venetië Filmfestival

Drama - 2025 - TUN - 90 minuten
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Download persmaterialen: Cineart.nl/pers/the-voice-of-hind-rajab

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Synopsis

Met THE VOICE OF HIND RAJAB krijgt de zesjarige Palestijnse Hind Rajab haar stem terug. Regisseur Kaouther Ben Hania reconstrueert de schokkende, waargebeurde gebeurtenissen rondom haar dood aan de hand van de originele telefoongesprekken tussen Hind en de hulpdiensten. Een urgente, confronterende en unieke filmbeleving.

29 januari 2024. De vrijwilligers van de Rode Halve Maan ontvangen een noodoproep. Een meisje van zes jaar, Hind Rajab, zit vast in een onder vuur genomen auto in Gaza en smeekt om hulp. Terwijl de hulpverleners haar aan de telefoon proberen te houden, zetten ze alles op alles om een ambulance bij haar te krijgen. Maar zonder toestemming van het Israëlische leger kan er geen voertuig worden toegelaten. Ze wachten urenlang op antwoord, maar uiteindelijk komt alle hulp te laat. Hind's stem blijft achter als getuigenis. De scènes in de meldkamer van de hulpdiensten zijn gereconstrueerd en geënceneerd, op basis van ooggetuigenverslagen en transcripties; de stemmen op de geluidsbanden zijn echt. Kaouther Ben Hania: "This story is about our shared responsibility (...) and how the silence of the world is part of the violence".

THE VOICE OF HIND RAJAB won de Grote Juryprijs op het Filmfestival van Venetië en de Grand Prix voor de Beste Film op Film Fest Gent. De film is tevens de Oscarinzending voor Tunesië, waarmee Kaouther Ben Hania opnieuw kans maakt op een Oscar - na haar eerdere nominaties voor FOUR DAUGHTERS en THE MAN WHO SOLD HIS SKIN.

*Deze film is gebaseerd op waargebeurde feiten en op noodoproepen die daadwerkelijk zijn opgenomen door de Palestijnse Rode Halve Maan.
De stemmen die wij horen, zijn echt.*





Director: Kaouther Ben Hania

Biography

Director Kaouther Ben Hania constantly explores the boundaries between fiction and documentary. Her last film, *FOUR DAUGHTERS*, was nominated for the Best Documentary Academy Awards® 2024 after being presented in Competition at the Cannes Film Festival. The film received numerous prestigious awards and was sold in over 40 territories.

Her previous film *THE MAN WHO SOLD HIS SKIN* was also nominated at the Academy Awards® for Best International Feature Film in 2021, representing Tunisia.

All her other films have premiered at prestigious festivals including: Cannes, Venice, AFI, Los Angeles, Locarno, IDFA, Hot Docs Toronto.

THE VOICE OF HIND RAJAB is her sixth film.

Filmography

THE VOICE OF HIND RAJAB (2025)
FOUR DAUGHTERS (2023)
THE MAN WHO SOLD HIS SKIN (2020)
BEAUTY AND THE DOGS (2017)
ZAINEB HATES THE SNOW (2016)
THE CHALLAT OF TUNIS (2014)

Q&A WITH KAOUTHER BEN HANIA

"I felt an overwhelming wave of helplessness and sorrow..."

Hind Rajab's final call is one of the most harrowing and emblematic stories to emerge from Gaza, a moment that was meticulously investigated by outlets like The Washington Post, Sky News, and Forensic Architecture. It resonated globally as both intimate tragedy and public indictment. At what point did you decide that this story needed to become a film?

I first came across a short audio clip of Hind Rajab calling for help. Her small voice breaking through chaos, asking simply not to be left alone. The moment I heard it, something inside me shifted. I felt an overwhelming wave of helplessness and sorrow: not intellectual, but physical. As if the world tilted slightly off its axis.

Hind's voice, in that moment, became something more than a child's desperate plea. It felt like the very voice of Gaza itself, calling for help into a void, met with indifference, met with silence. It was a metaphor made painfully real: a cry for rescue that the world could hear, but to which no one seemed willing or able to respond.

I reached out to the Palestine Red Crescent Society to hear the full recording. It was over seventy minutes long, seventy minutes of waiting, of fear, of trying to hold on. It was one of the most difficult things I've ever listened to.

I then began speaking with Hind's mother, and with the people who were on the other end of that call, the ones who tried, against impossible odds, to save her. We spoke for hours. From their words, and from the haunting presence of Hind's voice itself, I began to build a story. A story rooted in truth, carried by memory, and shaped by the voices of those who were there.

Why did you feel compelled to tell this story through the medium of cinema?

Even with denied access to Gaza, some investigative journalism has emerged, as you mentioned. But I believe cinema offers something different. It doesn't report, it remembers. It doesn't argue, it makes you feel.

What haunted me was not just the violence of what happened, but the silence that followed. That's not something a report can hold. That's something only cinema, in its stillness and intimacy, can attempt to contain.

So I turned to the only tool I have (cinema) not to explain or analyze, but to preserve a voice. To resist amnesia. To honor a moment the world should never forget. This story is also about our shared responsibility, about how systems fail Gazan children, and how the silence of the world is part of the violence.

This is a film rooted in a real and devastating loss: the death of a child whose voice was heard around the world. You've spoken about listening to the full audio recording and reaching out to those directly involved. But approaching such a sensitive and personal story inevitably raises questions of consent, trust, and representation. How did Hind Rajab's family and particularly her mother Wessam respond to your desire to tell this tragic story through the medium of cinema? And in what ways did their support shape the process of creation?

After I heard the full recording from the Palestine Red Crescent Society, I knew instantly (in my body, not just my mind) that I had to make this film. But I also knew one thing with absolute clarity: if Hind's mother said no, I would walk away. That conversation wasn't a formality, it was the foundation. Without her consent, nothing would move forward. Rana, from the Red Crescent, was the one who put me in contact with her. Rana had been on the line with Hind for hours that day, and she and Hind's mother had since developed a bond. They had made a promise to each other that when this horror ends, they would go together to visit Hind's grave. That simple gesture spoke volumes to me about the kind of care and trust already surrounding Hind's memory.

Hind's mother is an extraordinary woman, graceful, intelligent, and profoundly kind. From the very first call, I was transparent. I told her: " This film will only happen if you want it to. The decision is yours ". She told me everything about Hind, her personality, her dreams, the way she laughed. I felt that, in sharing all this with me, she was trying to keep her daughter alive, to make sure that her memory didn't vanish, or become just another news item. Hind's mother spoke with her family about the film, and they all gave their full support and consent. Her voice, marked by quiet resilience, boundless love, and unspeakable pain, flows through every moment of the shaping of this film.

This film is not mine alone. It carries the weight of Hind's mother trust, the memory of a child whose voice the world cannot afford to ignore, and the courage of those who tried to reach her: the Red Crescent team who stayed on the line, the medic, and the ambulance driver who were killed in the attempt. It holds the grace of those who have lost everything, yet still found the strength and generosity to open their hearts and share with me their mourning, their dignity, and their unwavering humanity.

While Hind's voice remains the emotional heartbeat of the film, the narrative unfolds through the eyes of those who tried to save her: the Red Crescent team on the other end of the call. How did their testimonies shape the writing process? And how did you navigate the creative and ethical challenge of translating their lived experience into the language of cinema?

When I began speaking with the real Rana, Omar, Nisreen, and Mahdi I quickly realised that none of them had ever heard the recording of their own voices from that day. I had access to the full audio through the Palestine Red Crescent Society, but they hadn't listened to it since it was archived. So when they spoke to me, they weren't recounting what they said but they were recounting what they felt.

That distinction was incredibly important, both ethically and cinematically. Their testimonies weren't factual transcripts but they were deeply personal, subjective accounts of fear, helplessness, confusion, and moral urgency. That gave me a unique

layer to work with: while the recording serves as a factual backbone of the film, their memories allowed me to center their inner experiences.

The writing process, for me, was really about navigating between these two worlds: the archival and the emotional, the documented and the lived. Cinema gave me the language to hold both.

One of the most striking aspects of the film is the raw, unfiltered presence of the actors. There's a palpable authenticity in their reactions. Is that because they were hearing Hind's real voice during the shoot? And how did that shape their performances?

Yes, what you're sensing is real. The actors weren't just performing scripted lines. They were re-inhabiting a lived moment. During the shoot, each actor was repeating, almost word for word, what their real-life counterpart had once said to Hind. And in their earpieces, they were hearing Hind's actual voice, taken from the original recording. All of the actors are Palestinian (as were most of the extras) and this film meant a great deal to them. They were not just interpreting a story; they were carrying something that touched them personally, historically, and politically. This wasn't abstract. It was real, close, immediate.

It was emotionally overwhelming, not only for them, but for the entire crew. You could feel a kind of collective silence on set, a reverence. The usual boundaries between acting and witnessing seemed to dissolve.

Your work has long navigated the porous boundary between documentary and fiction: a tension that found a striking culmination in *FOUR DAUGHTERS*, with *THE VOICE OF HIND RAJAB*, you return to this liminal space, but in an even more radical and intimate form. How would you describe this film in terms of genre? Is it dramatization grounded in fact, or a documentary cloaked in narrative?

This question touches the very heart of my practice. I've never been fully comfortable with fixed genre definitions, especially when dealing with stories that carry deep emotional and political weight. *THE VOICE OF HIND RAJAB* is, yes, a dramatized film. It is scripted, constructed, and performed. But it's also anchored in an undeniable, painful truth and more than that, it's built around a real voice, that of Hind herself, captured in the final moments of her life.

For *THE VOICE OF HIND RAJAB* I had to find a cinematic form where the narration is not about invention, but about a transmission of memory, of grief, of failure. In that sense, I didn't feel I was inventing anything. I felt I was receiving something (something urgent, something sacred) and my role was to shape a cinematic space capable of holding that voice with dignity.

So I wouldn't say this film "blurs" the lines between genres. I would say it intensifies them, it stretches the limits of what dramatization can contain and what documentary can protect. All of these were ways of resisting narrative conventions and trying to get closer to a different kind of truth: not just what happened, but what it felt like, what it meant.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Saja Kilani

Saja Kilani is a Palestinian/Jordanian/Canadian actress and spoken word poet. She holds degrees in International Relations and Theatre from the University of Toronto, and a degree in Film/TV from the Toronto Film School (TFS), where she received the Best Female Performance Award at the TFS Film Festival. Her first feature film performance, SIMSIM, earned her the Best First Time Lead Actress Award at the Amman International Film Festival in 2025. A recipient of the Canadian Arab Institute's 30 Under 30 Award, Saja is passionate about storytelling and bringing underrepresented voices to the screen.

Motaz Malhees

Motaz Malhees was born in Jenin, Palestine. He joined The Freedom Theatre's Professional Acting School at 16. He was one of Juliano Mer Khamis's students and upon graduating, joined an elite group of Palestinian professional actors. Malhees has performed in theatre and film all over the world, most recently in the Middle East, the UK and Europe, the USA, Southeast Asia, and Australia.

Amer Hlehel

Palestinian Actor, director and playwright Amer Hlehel known for his appearance in several films such as MEDITERRANEAN FEVER, ALAM, THE STRANGER - AL GARIB, TEL AVIV ON FIRE, PERSONAL AFFAIRS, THE TIME THAT REMAINS, AMREEKA, and the Golden Globe awardwinning PARADISE NOW.

Clara Khoury

Clara Khoury is a Palestinian-American actress acclaimed for her dynamic and versatile performances in film and theatre... Her career launched with a celebrated role in the Palestinian film RANA'S WEDDING, by Hani Abu Assad, earning her the Best Actress Award at the Marrakech Film Festival. Known for her captivating portrayals in a range of films, including, THE SYRIAN BRIDE, INHERITANCE AND BODY OF LIES, MARJOUN AND THE FLYING HEADSCARF, and many more. Khoury continues to impress audiences with her compelling performances on tv in BAGHDAD, CENTRAL for Channel4 on Hulu.

PRODUCERS

Nadim Cheikhrouha

Nadim Cheikhrouha has been a producer for nearly twenty years. After gaining solid experience in production and within television networks, he dedicated himself to producing auteur films with a distinctive vision and international reach. Through Tanit Films, which he founded in 2014, and Mime Films, established in 2022, he has worked with numerous renowned filmmakers.

Among his most notable collaborations is his long-standing artistic partnership with Kaouther Ben Hania, on *BEAUTY AND THE DOGS* (2017 – Best Sound Creation Award, Cannes – Un Certain Regard), *THE MAN WHO SOLD HIS SKIN* (2020 – Academy Award nomination for Best International Feature 2021, Best Actor Award Orizzonti, Venice International Film Festival 2020), *FOUR DAUGHTERS* (2023 – César Award for Best Documentary 2024, Academy Award nomination for Best Documentary Feature 2024, L'OEil d'or for Best Documentary, Cannes 2023) and, most recently, *THE VOICE OF HIND RAJAB* (2025 – Official Competition, Venice International Film Festival; Toronto International Film Festival – TIFF).

He has also produced the films of Mohammed Ben Attia (*HEDI*, 2016 – Berlinale, Best First Feature Award and Silver Bear for Best Actor; *DEAR SON*, 2018 – Directors' Fortnight, Cannes; *BEHIND THE MOUNTAINS*, 2023 – Venice International Film Festival, Orizzonti section), Philippe Faucon (*FATIMA*, 2015 – Directors' Fortnight, Cannes, César Awards for Best Film, Most Promising Actress, and Best Adaptation; *AMIN*, 2018 – Directors' Fortnight, Cannes; *THE HARKIS*, 2022 – Directors' Fortnight, Cannes) as well as Meryam Joobeur (*WHO DO I BELONG TO*, 2024 – Official Competition, Berlinale). His films have been presented at the most prestigious international festivals such as Cannes, Venice, Berlinale, TIFF and have earned major awards, reflecting his commitment to ambitious, globally engaged cinema.

Odessa Rae

Odessa Rae is an Academy Award and BAFTA-winning producer who was key in the formation of Ivanhoe Pictures, which produced the box office hit, *CRAZY RICH ASIANS*. She became widely known for producing *NAVALNY* (CNN Films/Warner Bros.), the Academy Award-winning documentary that premiered at Sundance 2022, where it won both the Festival Favorite and the U.S. Documentary Audience Award.

Odessa's films have screened at major festivals around the world, including the 2024 Venice Film Festival with the Oscar-shortlisted *HOLLYWOODGATE*, and the 2024 Cannes Film Festival with *IT DOESN'T MATTER* (dir. Josh Mond).

She is the recipient of numerous honors including the Producers Guild Award, Directors

Guild Nomination, Columbia DuPont Award, Grierson Award, Cinema Eye Honor, Critics Choice Award, and a Peabody nomination. Odessa is the recipient of the 2023 UN Sustainable Goals Impact Through Film Award.

James Wilson

A Best Picture Oscar-nominee for Jonathan Glazer's *THE ZONE OF INTEREST* which won Best International Film and Best Sound Oscars. The film won the Grand Prix in the competition of the 2023 Cannes Film Festival. Wilson also produced Glazer's *UNDER THE SKIN*, which world premiered at the 2013 Venice Film Festival. He produced Trey Shults' *WAVES* which world premiered at the 2019 Telluride Film Festival.

Lynne Ramsay's *YOU WERE NEVER REALLY HERE*, which world premiered at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival, winning Best Actor for Joaquin Phoenix, and Best Screenplay.

Andrew Dominik's *ONE MORE TIME WITH FEELING* featuring Nick Cave, which world premiered at the 2016 Venice Film Festival and was Grammy-nominated for Best Music Film. Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard's *20,000 DAYS ON EARTH*, winner of both Directing and Editing awards at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival.

Joe Cornish's *ATTACK THE BLOCK* (2011), James Marsh's *THE KING*, which world premiered in Un Certain Regard at the 2005 Cannes Film Festival, and Sophie Fiennes' *THE PERVERT'S GUIDE TO IDEOLOGY* (2012) with Slavoj Žižek.

Previously, he was a production executive at Fox Searchlight Pictures, and later Film4, supervising development and production on many films including *SEXY BEAST*, *DANCER IN THE DARK*, *THE FILTH AND THE FURY* and *THE LAST KING OF SCOTLAND*.



Cast

Saja Kilani	as Rana Hassan Faqih
Motaz Malhees	as Omar A . Alqam
Amer Hlehel	as Mahdi M. Aljamal
Clara Khoury	as Nisreen Jeries Qawas

Represented by Lara Abul Failat - Nevername Artists Agency

Crew

Written and Directed by	Kaouther Ben Hania
Director of Photography	Juan Sarmiento G.
Editors	Qutaiba Barhamji Maxime Mathis Kaouther Ben Hania
Production Sound Mixer	Amal Attia
Sound Editor	Elias Boughedir
Sound Designers	Gwenno�� LeBorgne Marion Papinot
Re-recording Mixer	Lars Ginz��
Music by	Amine Bouhafa
Production Designer	Bassem Marzouk
Costume Designer	Khadija Zeggai
First Assistant Director	Marie Fischer
Colorist	Philipp Orgassa
Line Producer	Lina Chaabane Menzli

A Nadim Cheikhrouha presentation

Produced by	Nadim Cheikhrouha Odessa Rae James Wilson
Executive Producer	Elizabeth Woodward

In Cooperation with
The Palestine Red Crescent Society

A MIME FILMS & TANIT FILMS PRODUCTION

Executive producers	Brad Pitt Dede Gardner Jeremy Kleiner Joaquin Phoenix Rooney Mara Jonathan Glazer Alfonso Cuaron
In association with	Film4 MBC Studios Projects Stitching Giustra International Foundation Watermelon Pictures Utopia Studios PFF MeMo Films Sunnyland Films (A.R.T. Group) Rasha Mansouri Elmasry & Hassan Elmasry RaeFilm Studios JW Films WILLA Plan B Valentine
With the contribution of	Tunisian Ministry of Cultural Affairs Fund for the Promotion and Investment in Literary and Artistic Creativity
Executive Producers	Guillaume & Sarah Rambourg The Rambourg Foundation Sawsan Asfari Ramez & Tiziana Sousou Jemima Khan Amed Khan Jorie Graham Geraldyn Dreyfous Mohannad Malas Common Pictures Frank Giustra Farhana Bhula Ali Jaafar Samar Akrouk Hana Al-Omair Hamza Ali Badie Ali

Executive producers (cont.)

Karim Ahmad
Michella Rivera-Gravage
Francesco Melzi D'Eril
Gabriele Moratti

Co-Executive Producers

Stephanie & Erik Nadi Olson
Sabine Getty
1888 Films
Barc Productions

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