

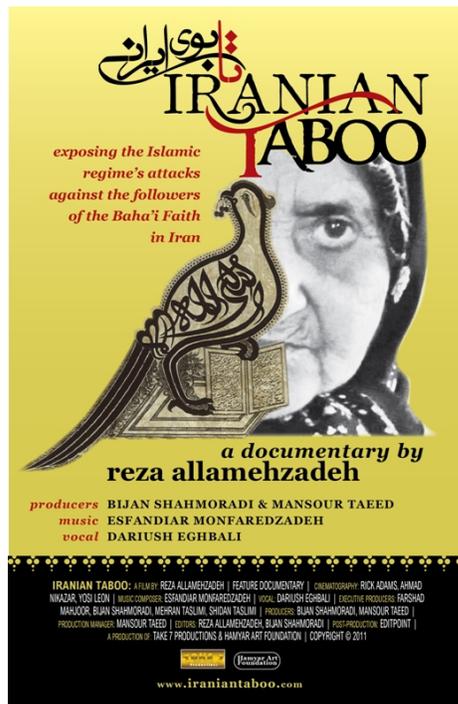
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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'IRANIAN TABOO', A DOCUMENTARY BY REZA ALLAMEHZADEH

Exposing the Islamic regime's attacks against the followers of the Baha'i Faith in Iran

Los Angeles, CA, February 10, 2012 – *Iranian Taboo*, a documentary by Reza Allamehzadeh, will begin screening in Los Angeles from February 24 to March 1 at Laemmle's Music Hall 3 in Beverly Hills and in DC, San Diego, Atlanta, Orlando, Montreal, Chicago, Toronto, San Francisco and Seattle in the following days.

Reza Allamehzadeh, an Iranian-Dutch filmmaker banned from entering his homeland, enlisted the aid of friends who clandestinely filmed inside Iran in order to explore this century old taboo.



Iranian Taboo tells the story of an Iranian Baha'i woman, Nadereh and her 14-year-old daughter who decide to sell all of their belongings and leave their homeland, to take refuge in the West.

Iranian Taboo takes us across continents from Turkey to Israel, and from the U.S. to Iran and gives us a unique insights into the persecution of Baha'is in Iran - from the underground Baha'i University (BIHE) to the oppressed Baha'i peasants of the *Eival* village in the northern province of *Mazandaran*. The film includes never seen before interviews with some of the most respected Iranian scholars, authors and politicians, speaking about the persecution of Baha'is in Iran.

All scenes within Iran were shot undercover by local contacts of the filmmaker.

PRESS SCREENING:

Wednesday, Feb 15, 2012 – 10 a.m.

Royal Theater (Laemmle)

11523 Santa Monica Blvd. West Los Angeles, CA

Media inquiries welcome.

To view the **trailer** and more information about **screenings schedule**, visit the film's official website at www.IranianTaboo.com

Director's Statement:

I have made several challenging documentaries during my long career as a filmmaker. Films like "Speak out Turkmen!" on the bloody war between well organized army of the newly established Islamic regime of Iran (1979) and poorly organized Turkmen tribe in the northern Iran. "Holy Crime" on State terrorism of the Islamic government in Europe, which resulted in assassination of more than 80 well-known dissidents, in just one decade.

But none of them was as difficult to make as the 'Iranian Taboo'. In spite of the fact that I'm banned to enter my homeland, I managed to film deep inside Iran, with the help of devoted friends who risked their lives to film the footage that I needed for this film. Organizing and obtaining access to the vast range of the interviewees in this film, from Shirin Ebadi to Abolhassan Banisadr was another challenging point that I managed to overcome.

'Iranian Taboo' is the most personal documentary that I have ever made!

FILMMAKERS



REZA ALLAMEHZADEH (Director) is an Iranian-Dutch filmmaker, film critic and writer based in the Netherlands since 1983. Allamehzadeh was born in 1943 in Sari, Iran. He studied film directing at the Tehran Academy of Film and Television from 1966 to 1969. Alongside with filmmaking he is regularly writing and publishing children's books, novels and short stories. He teaches film and TV courses at various universities around the world, including Hollins University in Virginia (U.S.), Leeds Metropolitan University (U.K.) and International R/TV Training Center in the Netherlands. Some of his films include:

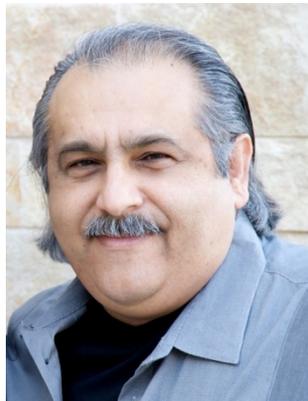
'The Trap' (1973); awarded Grand Prix at the 12th International film festival for Children and Youth in Gijon, Spain, 'A Few Simple Sentences' (1986); awarded the Best Short at the 1986 Stockholm International Immigrant Film Festival, Best Children's Film at Tomar 1987 International Festival of Cinema for Children and Youth and the Best Children's Film by the jury of the International Centre of Films for Children and Youth (CIFEJ) at International Moscow Film Festival in 1987, 'Guests of Hotel Astoria (1988); feature length, selected for the Venice, Moscow, Montreal and Chicago Film Festivals and 'Holy Crime'; a controversial documentary on State terrorism of Islamic government of Iran in European countries.



BIJAN SHAHMORADI (Producer) started his film career in 1979 by partaking in the Iranian Art Atelier film editing classes under the direction of Reza Allamehzadeh. Prior to his political imprisonment in 1982, he was the editor and assistant director in a number of short movies. He also assisted in dubbing a number of foreign films, one of which was "Pedagogy", a film well received by many Iranians.

In 1986, after his release from prison, he immigrated to the United States. In addition to building a career as a civil engineer, Bijan also started the production company Take 7 Productions and continued his work in movie production and distribution. "Guests of Hotel Astoria", which was the first film produced by this company, received much recognition and acclaim in major film festivals, including festivals held in Venice, Moscow, Montreal and Chicago. Other films, such as "Night After the Revolution" and "Holy Crime" were jointly produced by Take 7 Productions and Holland Television.

The theatrical play "Mossadegh" was produced by Take 7 Productions and performed in more than 20 cities in Europe and the United States. In addition to co-producing "Iranian Taboo", Bijan has made significant contributions to editing the film.



MANSOUR TAEED (Producer) emigrated from Iran to the U.S. at the age of 16. After receiving his Master's degree in Physics from the University of California, Berkeley, he attended Columbia University in New York to further his education at which time he realized that he does not need a PhD in Physics to be a thespian; his first passion.

He started his acting career in 1981 by performing in "Shahr Ghesseh" (City Full of Stories) by Bijan Mofid. In 1985, Mansour founded Darvag Theater Company along with other Bay Area artists. In 1986 he wrote and directed his first play, "Raghshy Incheneen" (Such a Dance) and subsequently he wrote, directed and acted in more than 40 plays for Darvag Theater Company and other Bay Area theater companies. Among his recent works, he played the role of Sinbad in "The Eight Voyage of Sinbad" by Bahram Bayzaee, and Babak in "From Satellite with Love" by Houshang Touzie and a brief role in the movie, "The Kite Runner". Currently he has been touring his one man play called "Ma Jassoos Neesteem" (We Are Not Spies) in the

U.S., Canada, Europe and Australia.

تابوی ایران
**IRANIAN
TABOO**

*exposing the
Islamic regime's attacks
against the followers
of the Baha'i Faith
in Iran*

A feature documentary film by
REZA ALLAMEHZADEH

Cinematography
RICK ADAMS
AHMAD NIKAZAR
YOSI LEON

Music composed by
ESFANDIAR MONFAREDZADEH

Vocal
DARIUSH EGHBALI

Executive Producers
FARSHAD MAHJOOR
BIJAN SHAHMORADI
MEHRAN TASLIMI
SHIDAN TASLIMI

Producers
BIJAN SHAHMORADI
MANSOUR TAEED

Production Manager
MANSOUR TAEED

Editors
REZA ALLAMEHZADEH
BIJAN SHAHMORADI

Sound Engineers
RAVID DVIR
THANASSIS PLIAKIS

Post-Production
EDITPOINT

A production of



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Iranian Taboo (2011)
Running Time: 76 minutes
Language: Persian / English with sub-title

This film is not yet rated.

For production notes, poster artwork, stills & captions please visit:

www.IranianTaboo.com

For downloadable trailers and clips please contact:

CAST

ABOLHASSAN BANISADR

Iranian politician, economist and human rights activist who served as the first President of Iran after the 1979 Islamic Revolution until his impeachment on June 21, 1981 by the Parliament of Iran. Prior to his presidency, he was Minister of Foreign Affairs in the interim government.

"They brought in a banner to the main hall of the Presidential Palace that contained information about the Baha'i network in Iran, and displayed it all around. The banner was this wide showing the network from city to city, village to village and said that this is the network of foreign spies. So, let's say they have a network. Is it not true that you have mosques? Mullahs in Iran also have a network. This does not mean that they are spies." - **Quote from Iranian Taboo**

SHIRIN EBADI

Iranian lawyer, a former judge and human rights activist and founder of Defenders of Human Rights Center in Iran. October 2003, Ebadi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her significant and pioneering efforts for democracy and human rights, especially women's, children's, and refugee rights. She was the first ever Iranian, and the first Muslim woman to have received the prize.

"To work...to make an honest living or to get a work permit, to open up a shoe repair shop or a restaurant, you don't have to be a Muslim. Where in Islam does it say that a shoemaker has to be Muslim? Why don't you give them a work permit." - **Quote from Iranian Taboo**

MOHAMMAD JAFARI

Former advisor to Abolhassan Banisadr (first President of Iran after the 1979 Islamic Revolution), former Chief Editor of "Enghelab Eslami" newspaper. He was a political prisoner in Iran from 1981-1986.

"The belief is that these individuals are against national interest and this has been the case for the past 150 years. You have to realize that we are in a country in which this group of people, as a whole, is called spies. We are not talking about individuals doing something wrong, that's a separate issue. They have decided that this community, in its entirety, is spies. And they take advantage of this misconception that is embedded in society." - **Quote from Iranian Taboo**

ABDOL-KARIM LAHIDJI

Human Rights Watch award recipient in 1990, Vice President of International Federation of Human Rights since 1998, elected in five consecutive congress of this NGO.

"In every society, civil rights were gained only after a struggle. Civil rights in America would never have come about absent the struggle of African Americans. And if the Baha'is don't fight, it is uncertain whether, in future Iran, they will ever gain their true civil rights." - **Quote from Iranian Taboo**

HEDAYAT MATIN-DAFTARI

Political Activist & grandson of celebrated Iranian nationalist Dr. Mohammad Mosaddegh

"Falsafi was the same person who, after the 1953 Coup, tried to divert public attention from the military tribunals held for members of the National Front, the Officers Organization, as well as the execution of Dr. Fatemi and others. In order to divert attention from these events, they promoted anti-Baha'i activities. They felt this was something that could draw the support of the "Bazaar", lessen their resistance to the Coup and cause a division amongst the people." - **Quote from Iranian**

NASSER MOHAJER

Historian

"One issue was that Dr. Berjis was the head of the Baha'i Spiritual Assembly in town. And due to this fact, he was a main target for the clerics and religious fundamentalists. The assistant prosecutor, Mohammad Taghi Damghani, may he rest in peace, brought our attention to this important historic event. Dr. Berjis refuses to give into this heinous demand. Then, together, they draw their knives and mutilate his body with over 80 stabs that were detected by the coroner." - **Quote from Iranian Taboo**

SHAPOOR RASEKH

Doctor in sociology, former professor at the University of Tehran, and former Iranian Secretary of State for Economic and Social Planning. Former consultant to UNESCO, the ITEP and IBE.

"During the Pahlavi regime, all the laws focused on prohibiting the employment of Baha'is. At times, these laws were strictly enforced. And in some instances, depending on the person in charge, the laws were less strict. But at no time during the Pahlavi regime were the laws prohibiting the employment of Baha'i people overturned." - **Quote from Iranian Taboo**

SOLI SHAHVAR

Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Middle Eastern History, the University of Haifa; Director, the Ezri Center for Iran and Gulf Studies; Research Fellow, the Harry S. Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace, Jerusalem; Fellow, Institute of Historical Research, London.

"The modern history of Iran, from the inception of the Baha'i faith, shows that Baha'is have always been easily sacrificed for political gain. We have seen this both during the reign of Reza Shah as well as Mohammad Reza Shah." - **Quote from Iranian Taboo**

FEREYDOUN VAHMAN

Iranologist and Professor of Religion and Linguistics at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

"The Baha'is paid a heavy price in this Revolution. Their holiest places of worship, such as the House of Ba'b and House of Baha were destroyed. The Baha'is were deprived of their most basic needs and still are. When a human being is subject to such cruelty and brutality, he or she has no choice but to raise his or her voice in protest and ask, what are my rights? Am I a human being? What rights do I have in this country?" - **Quote from Iranian Taboo**