

PLACE

Dhaka

DATE

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International Dhaka Film Festival shares refugee voices with support of UNHCR

The 14th International Inter University Short Film Festival (IIUSFF), jointly organized by the Dhaka University Film Society (DUFS) and UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, has come to an end yesterday, with Syrian director Muschirf Shekh Zeyn awarded the winner in the “Short Film on Refugee” category for “Killing Bagheera”, a moving story on the risks, challenges and emotions refugees go through while fleeing for safety.

“Films are a powerful tool to communicate and connect. They transcend borders, religions, cultures, and language and create a sense of awareness and compassion that can translate into empathy and support,” said Johannes van der Klaauw, UNHCR Representative in Bangladesh. “Films inform, call for reflection and can enhance solidarity.”

This year 16 short films out of 170 that were submitted for the “Short Film on Refugee” category were screened before hundreds of viewers in Barisal, Chattogram, Dhaka, Khulna, Mymensingh, Rangamati, and Sylhet districts of Bangladesh. The films showcased the talent of young filmmakers from around the world, and captured the stories of refugees in Egypt, Germany, India, Italy, Portugal, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Syria, Tunisia, and Türkiye.

“This is a platform where young talents make us think of our mutual responsibilities to each other. We thank UNHCR for supporting this film festival. This support has not only a monetary value but is also a huge inspiration for the young filmmakers,” said Nasiruddin Yousuff, chief guest of the award ceremony.

“UNHCR is proud to support DUFS to create a space where young people, through film, can share messages on the global refugee cause to prompt awareness and discussion both here in Bangladesh and other parts of the world,” said Van der Klaauw, “Not only Rohingya refugees generously sheltered in Bangladesh, but each refugee around the world has individual stories. As their displacement continues, the power of film to tell these stories - including through platforms like this - is needed to keep refugees’ resilience, hopes and dreams alive and to inspire action to offer them a brighter future,” he concluded.

This edition of the International Inter University Short Film Festival marked the fifth year of the collaboration between UNHCR and Dhaka University. The jury was made up of six renowned Bangladeshi film critics.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Regina De La Portilla, +8801847327279 ; delaport@unhcr.org ;

Mostafa Mohammad Sazzad Hossain, +8801313046459 ; hossaimo@unhcr.org ;