Doha Film Festival 2026 Opening Film '*The Station*' is a bridge for Yemeni audiences

- *Sara Ishaq, co-writer and producer Nadia Eliewat and five cast members met the media after the film's MENA premiere on DFF 2026 opening night*
- *Competing in the International Feature Film Competition, the film explores a women-only petrol station serving as a sanctuary in war-torn Yemen*

Doha, Qatar; November 20, 2026: Oscar-nominated director **Sara Ishaq** kept ***The Station*** focused on its humanitarian core to bring Yemeni audiences together.

Addressing the media in Doha after the film opened Doha Film Festival 2026, Ishaq was joined by co-writer and producer **Nadia Eliewat** and cast members **Randa Mohammed**, **Fatima Muthanna**, **Amal Esmail**, **Manal Al-Mulaiki** and **Shorooq Mohammed**.

"We wanted to keep the story focused on its humanity rather than complex political details. Using fictionalised names made the film a bridge for Yemeni audiences by giving screen space to the marginalised women and children who are often overlooked in news coverage," said Ishaq.

Ishaq said most of the cast are non-professional actors. With almost no casting agencies in Yemen, the team used social media and reached out to the Yemeni diaspora to find people who could play the film's women and children.

Eliewat described how the team assembled support from partners and funds across several countries for an independent Yemeni production, in the absence of local film funding. She said opening DFF 2026 was "a source of pride given the challenges facing the region, and that the film offers a different view of Yemeni life, one centred on humanity and the simple wish to live."

The Station, a warm, witty, and deeply personal story of female solidarity and survival in war-torn Yemen, is a Doha Film Institute Grantee and winner of the La Biennale di Venezia Award for Best Film in Post-Production at Final Cut in Venice 2025, competing in the International Feature Film Competition.

Inspired by a real women-only petrol station **Ishaq** was at in Sana'a in 2015, ***The Station*** is set inside a women-only petrol station in Yemen, a rare sanctuary where women gather for fuel, conversation, and moments of respite from the surrounding conflict. The film follows Layal as she is forced to reconnect with her estranged sister in a desperate effort to save her younger brother from enlistment.

The Station competes alongside 14 other narrative and documentary titles from across the Arab world, Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas in DFF 2026's International Feature Film Competition for US$185,000 in awards.

Key Partners of Doha Film Festival include Katara, Media City Qatar | Film Committee, and Visit Qatar. Taking place until Nov. 27 November 2026, Doha Film Festival brings together filmmakers, audiences, and industry voices from the region and beyond to honour original storytelling and important voices in film. For more information, visit www.dohafilm.com.

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