Doha Film Festival 2026 Opens Tomorrow with Sara Ishaq's *The Station*

DFF 2026 unites cultural luminaries, filmmakers and audiences in Doha to celebrate independent storytelling and creative exchange

- *Festival to screen 104 films from 60 countries including 17 World Premieres and 48 Middle East and North Africa Premieres*
- *Programme includes 11 DFI supported films and 7 by women filmmakers*

Doha, Qatar; November 18, 2026: Doha Film Festival (DFF) 2026 officially opens tomorrow, ushering in a week that highlights the power of storytelling, cultural exchange, and artistic courage. Taking place from 19 to 27 November 2026, this year's edition brings together visionary directors, acclaimed actors, industry professionals and film lovers from across the globe.

This year's festival begins with the highly anticipated Middle East and North Africa (MENA) premiere of *The Station,* the acclaimed debut feature by Yemeni-Scottish filmmaker Sara Ishaq. Set inside a women-only petrol station in war-torn Yemen, the powerful drama explores solidarity, family relationships, and the quiet spaces of refuge women carve out amidst conflict. Its selection as the opening film reflects the Institute's continued commitment to amplifying resilient voices from the region and sharing intimate human stories that foster empathy.

Over the festival, audiences can look forward to a dynamic lineup of world premieres, regional debuts, talks and discussions, industry sessions, youth programmes, music performances, Geekdom and other community initiatives across Doha.

With prizes totalling over USD $300,000, DFF 2026 features four main competition sections; International Feature Film Competition, International Short Film Competition, Made in Qatar Competition, the Ajyal Film Competition for youth aged 16-25 and the newly launched Cinema Alkhaleej programme honouring stories from across the Gulf.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, CEO of Doha Film Institute and Festival Director of DFF, said: "Cinema carries voices across borders and builds bridges where distance and difference might otherwise keep us apart. Doha Film Festival is a home for filmmakers who defy convention and reveal the full potential of independent cinema. As we begin this new chapter, we remain committed to championing stories of our shared humanity – stories that nurture empathy and deepen understanding. Opening with Sara Ishaq's *The Station* sets the tone for a programme that spans urgent documentaries, homegrown Qatari narratives, cherished classics and inclusive screenings. Together, they create a vibrant space where curiosity, discovery and the power of storytelling bring together audiences of all tastes."

The festival will welcome several special guests this year including filmmakers, artists and activists, whose work has inspired audiences all over the world. They include: Taim Hasan, Nandita Das, Naomi Kawase, Adam Bessa, Dora Bouchouch, Gianfranco Rosi, Kamal Aljafari, Sara Ishaq, Nadia Eliewat, Abeer Mohammed, Randa Mohammed, Fatima Muthanna, Ali Elrabi, Adil Hussain, Neha Dhupia, Jim Carter, James Gray, Daniele Rugo, Farah Nabulsi, William Parry, Hisham Fqih, Haya Alghanim, Muzna Al Musafer, Ahd Kamel among others.

Taking place from 19–27 November 2026, Doha Film Festival (DFF) marks the bold next chapter in Doha Film Institute's mission to nurture regional talent and champion urgent and authentic stories in cinema.

Key Partners of Doha Film Festival include Katara, Media City Qatar I Film Committee and Visit Qatar. 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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