

IN THE LAND OF BROTHERS

Directed by

Raha Amirfazli & Alireza Ghasemi

Written by

Alireza Ghasemi & Raha Amirfazli

Starring

Mohammad Hosseini (*Mohammad*)

Hamideh Jafari (*Leila*)

Bashir Nikzad (*Qasem*)

Cinematographer

Farshad Mohammadi

Editor

Hayedeh Safiyari

Production Designers

Saeid Asadi & Hamed Aslani

Costume Designer

Raha Dadkhah

Sound Designers

Taco Drijfhout

Original Soundtrack

Frédéric Alvarez

Produced by

Adrien Barrouillet

Alireza Ghasemi

Raha Amirfazli

Frank Hoeve

Charles Meeresse

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IN THE LAND OF BROTHERS

Log Line

Three members of an extended Afghan family start their lives over in Iran as refugees, unaware they face a decades-long struggle ahead to be “at home”.



Synopsis

Under the shadow of the US invasion, an extended Afghan refugee family begins their new lives in Iran unaware of the ultimate price expected of them as outliers in this (un)welcoming environment: Mohammad, a young teenager and promising student; Leila, a woman isolated by geography, and Qasem, who bears the weight of his family's sacrifice.

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Avec le soutien de
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INSTITUT FRANÇAIS

Avec le soutien de
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ASIAN CINEMA FUND
VIPO

En coproduction avec
CINEMA TEHRAN
AVIDIA

Une production
FURYO FILMS
LIMITED CIRCLE
BALDR FILM

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Technical Details

Title:	In the Land of Brothers
Original Persian:	Dar Sarzamin-e Barâdar / در سرزمین برادر
English:	In the Land Of Brothers
French:	Au Pays De Nos Frères
Year:	2024
Country of Origin:	Iran / France/ Netherlands
Language:	Persian (Farsi, Dan, Hazaragi)
Subtitles:	English, French, Dutch
Run Time:	95 minutes
Producers:	Furyo Films (FR), Limited Circle (IR), BALDR Film (NL)
Co-producers:	Cinema Tehran (IR), Avidia (FR)
Completion year:	2024
Color:	Color
Aspect ratio:	Flat 2:1
Format:	2K
Support:	DCP, ProResLT
Social:	@landofbrothers @furyofilms (Instagram)

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61554134377954>

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From the Directors

IN THE LAND OF BROTHERS is about the feeling of being “*the other*” in a place you thought you belonged. We want the audience to rethink the false constructs of boundaries around the globe, and to imagine a world without them.

Our biggest inspiration behind the film is evolutionary – from the assembled memories of our childhood Afghan friends leaving us, to recognizing the barriers Afghan immigrants face in Iran telling their own stories, as well as our deep artistic desire to tell stories of those marginalized societies and characters that surprise us in the hardest of circumstances.

In a world that is struggling with the daily displacement of many refugees that end up in an unfamiliar environment in hopes of building a new life, most media suggest that the immigrants think differently, possess values distinct from others, and consequently, may pose a threat to societies. We intend for this film to show people otherwise, to make them think of refugees as equals, and not as *others*.

We hope for our audiences to feel empathy for our characters, and to extend that empathy towards all people; to see how the despair of a predetermined fate can be fatal, and to rally against the existing complexities for refugees felt universally around the world.

About the Film: Screenwriting

During the scriptwriting stage, we confronted the first challenging decision: adhere to the regulations of the government and secure funding, or remain steadfast to the authenticity of the story, potentially risking self-imposed exile upon completion. Our choice was the latter, which is why Alireza now lives in Paris and Raha now lives in New York.

This film is a tribute to all Afghan people in Iran, and memorably our cast. Although we’ve created a self-imposed exile upon ourselves by making this film a reality, we hope to be able to make Iran worthy of the name “*In the Land of Brothers*”.

Alireza: I decided to become a lawyer back in high school, but I also happened to take the art entrance exam for the university. I was accepted to both law school and film school, and I had to choose one. I was very hesitant about which one to choose. I remember my mother saw my hesitation and told me, 'You love storytelling; use it to convince the world instead of the judge!' So, I chose to attend film school. It was a decision I never regretted!

Raha: As an introverted only child, there’s only so much you can do to entertain yourself. After a while, the school bus becomes a 19th century wagon and you the wagoner in the front row; the ladybug in the park attains a heartbreaking love story, and a spill of rice on the ground is an aerial shot of a war-zone with soldiers fighting each other. As far as I remember, I’ve always had multiple storylines going on in my head. Somehow among the

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chaos of the university entrance exam in Iran, I managed to get into film school, and only after that was when I realized, this was the thing I've loved and spent my whole life doing.

Alireza: Filmmaking has become an integral part of my identity. Perhaps there was a time when I knew precisely why it held such importance for me, but now, I can't pinpoint a specific reason. I merely know that without making films, my life would be considerably more challenging. I believe that human beings possess a significant veiled potential for doing evil, and that any form of art can serve as a restraint. Perhaps this is the most crucial aspect of filmmaking for the world we live in these days.

Raha: Films have now been around enough years for us to say every generation has grown up watching them. For me, it was through films that I got to discover different emotions, and the weird and sometimes uncomfortable mixture of them. I'm certain that there are so many untold and fresh stories that can evoke a whole new mixture of emotions and experiences in the audience, and it is in doing that that I found pleasure as a filmmaker. In the short life we lead, films provide a medium through which the audience can experience life in a completely different setting as their own. As an artist, giving people that gift is the most enjoyable thing I can do with my life.

Casting

After writing the script, we were determined to find actors from the Afghan community in Iran. To our great luck, we found an independent theater company in Tehran that worked exclusively with Afghan people. With their help, we started a 6-month process of interviewing non-actors. We met with many wonderful people, and got to know many that have lived through the experiences we had in our script. Eventually, we found our passionate ensemble that stuck by our side during many hours of rehearsal, and helped us through multiple revisions of the characters.

Raha: After we finalized the cast for the film, I knew we had made good choices but the realization of how truly amazing our cast was, came way later when they were on camera. Working with a cast that consists mainly of non-actors is magical. Each day they show up in front of the camera, as themselves, and trust the camera to capture their beauty, their charm, and their vulnerabilities. During each of the three stages of shooting this film, I became more certain that I'll always prefer to work mainly with non-actors.

Alireza: Choosing the film locations was one of the most challenging yet enjoyable aspects of **IN THE LAND OF BROTHERS**, I found. The film was shot in five different Iranian cities, and to choose these locations we extensively explored almost half of Iran across different seasons. Some of the most breathtaking and unique scenes I've ever witnessed in my life emerged from our search for the film's locations.

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Music

The music was composed by Frédéric Alvarez, a French composer who had seen one of Ali's short films and reached out directly to him to offer a collaboration on his next project. The composition process with Frédéric began during the scriptwriting stage; we read the script and shared mood-boards. It quickly emerged that each character could have their own instrument – Mohammad with the violin, Leila with the clarinet, Qasem with the cello. In the end those three instruments appear all along the film. The end credits music ties together all the themes of the film and reunites the characters. By the start of the production, Frederic had composed for each character their own sample theme which we played during shooting to set the mood. Many of these pieces originally written during Frederick's process in development became featured pieces in the final film. The music was recorded in a studio in Paris.

About Afghans living in Iran:

Forty years ago, following the invasion of Afghanistan, nearly four million Afghans fled to Iran, calling it the "*land of brothers*".

As the war became complex and the Afghans were unable to leave, the Iranian government began to enact laws pushing Afghans out, paving the way for widespread discrimination and creating distinction between Iranians and Afghans.

This becomes more specific towards the Hazara ethnicity, whose distinctive facial features make them recognizable from the Iranian. Through this film, we tried to understand the Afghan people's perspective on Iranian society, to explore the issues they face: survival, identity, dignity, and rights.

As Iranian citizens, police brutality and discrimination have been integrated into our daily lives for the last 40 years. We've been brought up to constantly fight a system that gets power by manipulating its people.

For years now, Iranians have become refugees themselves and spread across the world; but, when the concept of leaving one's own country became important to us as filmmakers, we finally assembled all the memories we had of the immigrant population in our own country: Raha's childhood friend getting deported overnight back to Afghanistan; Alireza's high school theater getting canceled when the Afghan leads were forced to suddenly leave the country, for example, and many, many more.

Alireza: As a child, my father (who was a doctor) would share stories he heard from his Afghan patients with my mother and I while keeping their identities private, of course, and I remember getting terrified of some of the details, thinking to myself "why is this treatment normal?"

Raha: My mom is a civil engineer working with Afghans all day as they are the major force of construction work in Iran – her personal working relationships with the Afghans yielded

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a lot of stories that I grew up hearing, always questioning the fairness of the situation they faced.

Afghan refugees are not allowed to work in any profession other than manual labor inside of Iran; thus, the voices of Afghan artists are kept in the dark – by law, they do not have a pathway to tell their own stories.

We hope people come out of watching **IN THE LAND OF BROTHERS** having experienced the struggles and mental strength that it takes for the people who try to build their new life outside of their home, and approach their daily lives with that knowledge. Empathy is a strong tool that can be achieved at its purest through watching films.

Our story is about people who fall in love, demonstrate loyalty to their families, and make sacrifices to protect one another, all while navigating the complexities of life in their forced exile, experiencing the deepest aspects of the human condition.

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The Film Team

Actor Hamideh Jafari (Leila) is an Afghan artist born and raised in Iran. She holds an undergraduate degree in Theater Design. Hamideh discovered her love for storytelling as a teenager, and she expressed this passion through acting, painting, and make-up. "In the Land of Brothers" is Hamideh's first feature film appearance.

Actor Bashir Nikzad (*Qasem*) was born in Kabul. He immigrated to Iran 30 years ago and started working in cinema and theater soon after. He is a professional tailor and a mentor of martial arts, and has won multiple national and international awards.

Actor Mohammad Hosseini (Mohammad) is from Bamyan, Afghanistan. He lives and works in Tehran as a shoemaker. He aspires to become a film and theater actor. "In the Land of Brothers" is Mohammad's first feature appearance.

Director Raha Amirfazli Raha Amirfazli is an Iranian filmmaker (1995 - Tehran) who graduated from the Art University of Tehran in Film Directing. She has made several short films that have earned her national and international screenings, including Solar Eclipse. In addition to serving as a referee in the Danish journal "Short Film Studies," she also served as the editor-in-chief of the "24 Frames" website. Raha is currently advancing her studies in the MFA Film Production program of New York University. Raha has completed in 2024 her first feature film "In the Land of Brothers".

Summary Filmography

Feature films (Writer, Director)

2024 - IN THE LAND OF BROTHERS (95')

Short films (Writer, Director)

2020 - SOLAR ECLIPSE (15')

2020 - DISINFECTION (5')

2018 - NAUSEA (20')

2017 - MADNESS (15')

Director Alireza Ghasemi is an Iranian Filmmaker (1990 - Tehran) who graduated in Filmmaking from the Art University of Tehran. He also spent a year as an exchange student at the Film Academy Baden-Württemberg in Germany. Alireza is an alumnus of the Berlinale Talent Campus 2022 and has directed several acclaimed short films, including "Lunch Time," which earned him a nomination for the Short Film Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 2017. Alireza completed his first feature film, "In the Land of Brothers," in 2024.

Summary Filmography

Feature films (Writer, Director)

2024 - IN THE LAND OF BROTHERS (95')

Short films (Writer, Director)

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2020 - SOLAR ECLIPSE (14')
2019 - AREZO (8')
2019 - EXTRA SAUCE (15')
2018 - BETTER THAN NEIL ARMSTRONG (20')
2017 - LUNCH TIME (15')
2016 - FREQUENCY (8')
2015 - SHORTCUT (8')

Producer Adrien BARROUILLET - Furyo Films (FR) is producer and co-founder at Furyo Films, based in Orléans. He is a graduate with a Masters degree in engineering from Télécom SudParis, and in management from Telecom EM. After 3 years in VOD distribution in Paris and New York, he worked as an analyst at Sony Pictures. In 2018, he joined the Atelier Ludwigsburg-Paris (La FEMIS / Filmakademie BW). In 2020 he joined Les Films du Bal on Nadav Lapid's *Le Genou d'Ahed* (Prix du Jury Cannes 2021). In 2024, he completed the production of *In the Land of Brothers* by Raha Amirfazli and Alireza Ghasemi which will premiere in the Sundance Film Festival 2024. He is a member of the EAVE Producer's Workshop class of 2024.

Co-Producer Frank HOEVE - BALDR Film (NL) is founding producer and owner of Amsterdam-based BALDR Film (2011). He (co-)produced several award-winning films that were selected to A-Festivals around the world, such as **Those Who Feel the Fire Burning** by Morgan Knibbe (2014, IDFA, two Dutch Academy Awards), **Etgar Keret: Based on a True Story** by Stephane Kaas (2017, International Emmy Award), **Sick, Sick, Sick** by Alice Furtado (2019, Cannes Directors Fortnight), **Window Boy would also like to have a Submarine** by Alex Piperno (2020, Berlinale), **Along the Way** by Mijke de Jong (2022, Opening Film IFFR), **In the Land of Brothers** by Raha Amirfazli and Alireza Ghasemi and **Soundtrack to a Coup d'Etat** by Johan Grimont both selected for Sundance 2024.

Frank graduated from the Haarlem Business School with a Bachelor of Economics and studied at the Pompeu-Farba University in Barcelona. Besides his producer work he has been vice-president of the New Filmmakers Association, board member for the Go Short International Film Festival and is currently member of the Supervisory Board of Movies that Matter Film Festival. He has participated in both ACE and EAVE Producer Workshops. Frank was selected as Producer on the Move during the Cannes Film Festival 2018.

Cinematographer Farshad Mohammadi is an Iranian Director of Photography. He has served as a DP in over 40 films that have brought him numerous nominations and awards over the years, including four nominations in the renowned Iranian Fajr Film Festival. He has worked with many well-known Iranian directors, including Kamal Tabrizi, Ramtin Labafi, Hamid Nematollah, and Bahman Farmanara. He is mostly famous for his work on the film "Orange Days" that premiered in the Toronto International Film Festival.

Editor Hayedeh Safiyari is an Iranian film editor and a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The majority of the edits she has carried out are for internationally well-known filmmakers such as Asghar Farhadi, Bahram Beyzai, Bahman

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Ghobadi, Rakhshan Banietemad, Reza Dormishian, Alireza Raeesian, Shahram Alidi, and Pooran Derakhshande. She is best known for her long-time collaborations with Iranian director Asghar Farhadi, including the Oscar-winning *A Separation* and *The Salesman*. She has edited over 80 feature fiction films and several documentaries over the thirty years. Most of these films have been selected and nominated by many well-world film festivals and received prestigious awards, and have brought her several precious awards namely, the Crystal Simorgh, the Statue of the Cinema House, Asian Film Award, Fajr Film Festival, Iran's Film Critics and Writers Association, Nominated for Cinema Writers Circle award and Goya International Cinephile Society award.

Composer Frédéric Alvarez studied music at the American School of Modern Music, the Schola Cantorum and then at the Conservatoire International de Musique de Paris before composing his first 2 soundtracks in 2014. He met Hubert Viel in 2015 and signed the music of: " *Petit Lapin* ", selected at the Brive Festival then of his feature film : " *Les Filles au Moyen-Âge* " with Michael Lonsdale released in 2016. He also collaborates on many occasions with Baptiste Drapeau, notably on the animated film " *Moitié-Moitié* ". During this period, he signed the music of several documentaries including " *Ballon sur Bitume* " a Yard production broadcast on Netflix worldwide. In 2017, he composed the soundtrack of " *Robin* ", a unit directed by Alice Douard and broadcast on Arte. In 2019, he returns to live music and released his first solo pop album " *Higher Ceilings* ". In 2020 he participates in the 3rd character Festival International Film Festival of Aubagne, in the Music workshop at the the Moulin d'Andé Cinema and he is the musical sponsor for the SoFilm de Genre residency. In spring 2021 will be released two feature films for which he composed the original music: " *La Troisième Guerre* " by Giovanni Aloi produced by Capricci Films with Anthony Bajon, Leïla Bekhti and Karim Leklou which was in the Orizzonti selection at the Venice Film Festival 2020 and " *Louloute* " by Hubert Viel produced by Batysphère Productions with Laure Calamy, winner of the Grand Prix of the International Film of La Roche-sur-Yon 2020. He teaches film music at the University of Picardie Jules Verne in Amiens.

Production Designer Saeed Asadi is an Iranian production designer. Since 2010, he has been working as a production and costume designer in cinema, contributing to the design of more than 30 feature films. Throughout these years, he has collaborated with numerous independent Iranian filmmakers, with one of the most notable being Mohammad Rasoulof. He was nominated for the Alexandre Trauner Award for Best Production Designer of the Year for " *There Is No Evil*," which won the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival in 2020.

Production Designer Hamed Aslani is an Iranian writer, director, and production designer. He has contributed to the production design of over 50 short films, 3 theaters, and 6 feature films. He has collaborated with renowned Iranian directors, including Bahman Ghobadi, Behnam Behzadi, Vahid Jalilvand, Feridoon Jirani, Ali Asgari, and Alireza Khatami. One of his last works is " *Terrestrial Verses*," which premiered at the 76th Cannes Film Festival.

Costume Designer Raha Dadkhah is an Iranian costume designer who began her professional career in 2008. Since then, she has actively contributed to numerous features,

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various short films, and several television series. including "Top Gear," directed by Mohammad Ahangarani, "Walking on Dry Grass" by Mehran Mahdavian, the television series "Hamsaayeh," and a variety of diverse short films such as "Funfair" by Kaveh Mazaheri, "This Road is Beautiful" by Ali Nazari, as well as "Garmabeh" and "Zaghchi" by Soroush Hossein Jani.

About the companies:

Furyo Films is a production company founded in 2020 by Emma Binet, Adrien Barrouillet and Charles Meresse. Their common desire is to create singular, ambitious and internationally-oriented cinema projects. They build on several years of complementary experience in various fields, from sales to production, and artistic agencies and distribution. They dedicate themselves to defending subtle outlooks from talented filmmakers, of any genre and from any country.

BALDR Film, founded in 2011 by Frank Hoeve, focuses on developing and (co-)producing challenging, director-driven films with a distinctive personal signature. Not risk-averse, he keeps urgent content and artistry at the core of his work.

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CREDITS (not yet final)

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Written and Directed by

Raha Amirfazli & Alireza Ghasemi

Starring

Mohammad Hosseini (as *Mohammad*)

Hamideh Jafari (as *Leila*)

Bashir Nikzad (as *Qasem*)

Marjan Khaleghi (as *Hanie*)

Hajeer Moradi (as *Asgari*)

Marjan Ettefaghian (as *Negin*)

Mehran Vosoughi (as *Behnam*)

Cinematographer

Farshad Mohammadi

Editor

Hayedeh Safiyari

Production Designers

Saeid Asadi

Hamed Aslani

Costume Designer

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Sound Designers

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