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LIFE SHINES A LIGHT: HOPE IN A REFUGEE CAMP ON THE TURKEY-SYRIA BORDER

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With media reels constantly highlighting the devastation in the Middle East, it's hard to picture any signs of peace or progress in these war-torn regions. But Apo W. Bazidi, a Kurdish native from Turkey and the director of "Resistance Is Life," reveals a glimmer of light and cultural collaboration that all begins with an eight-year-old girl.

"When the whole ISIS crisis began in the Middle East, I first heard about the horrifying stories of what those children and people were going through," says Bazidi. "As a child, I witnessed injustice and oppression, and I knew how it felt. So I packed my bag and went to the border to volunteer at the refugee camps and help the victims of the war."

With no intentions of creating a documentary, Bazidi's plans changed after meeting eight-year-old Evlin, a Syrian refugee living in a refugee camp with her family in Turkey.

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“It wasn’t just a film for me, because I lived and experienced what those people in the camps went through,” says Bazidi. “It was very hard to ‘kill my darlings’ and leave precious moments out of the film in order to focus on a simple storyline.”

“Resistance Is Life” is Bazidi’s first feature film. Celebrating its world premiere in Cleveland is an honor for his team.

“For us, this is not just a festival that shows films, but it’s a venue that narrows down films to their niche so filmmakers can meet their audience,” says Bazidi.

With so many eyes on terrorism and immigration, two timely social issues addressed in the film, Bazidi hopes CIFF filmgoers will walk away with new appreciation and understanding.

“I think the audience will find many answers to the questions they have about the whole crisis, and they will see a positive side in this story,” says Bazidi. “On the border, I witnessed global diversity as volunteers from all over the world came to help. I hope CIFF audiences will see the bravery of all the individuals in this film and be inspired by them.”

—Amy Brown



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