

## **The Artistic Freedom Initiative (AFI) and the International Federation of Film Archivists (FIAF) Unite to Celebrate Their Collective Efforts in Relocating Afghan Film Archivists at Risk to Safety in Germany**

**Headline: AFI and FIAF Celebrate Successful Relocation of Afghan Film Archivists to Germany**

**BERLIN, GERMANY – June 13th, 2024** – [Artistic Freedom Initiative \(AFI\)](#) and [International Federation of Film Archives \(FIAF\)](#) came together last week in Berlin in celebration of the successful evacuations of three Afghan film archivists – Hasibullah Sediqi, Fazel Jamil Hashimi, and Mohammad Fayaz Lutfi - thanks to a joint effort coordinated by the two organizations.

All three archivists and their families, who were previously living at risk under Taliban rule, are now relocated and fully integrated in Germany. One of the archivists, Hasibullah Sediqi, is now working at Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek on a scholarship provided by Gerda Henkel Stiftung. The other two, Fazel Jamil Hashimi and Mohammad Fayaz Lutfi, will soon join the National Archives of Germany in a professional capacity.

Following a meticulous and steadfast 18-month endeavor, the collective work of [AFI](#) and [FIAF](#) resulted in the German Government extending humanitarian visas to the archivists and their accompanying family members in 2023. This achievement is a testament to the power of collaboration and advocacy in safeguarding the lives and livelihoods of those under threat. Furthermore, this case serves as a compelling demonstration of the organizational synergy in coordinating the relocation of endangered cultural workers, facilitating crucial services for family reunification, and offering vital support for their professional and personal integrations into their new country. Finally, the relocation was a testament to the German government's prioritization of relocating threatened Afghan artists and cultural workers, initially through the humanitarian visa program and presently through the Bundesaufnahmeprogramm.

The event, which took place at the Deutsche Kinemathek in Berlin on June 5th, 2024, included remarks from [Christophe Dupin](#), the Senior Administrator of FIAF, [Sanjay Sethi](#), Co-Executive Director at AFI, and Rainer Rother, Artistic Director of Deutsche Kinemathek. The three archivists also gave moving remarks on their difficult journeys with their families. Key attendees included Germany's Minister of State Katja Keul and Michael Bock from the Federal Ministry of Culture and the Media. It was also the first time both organizations, [AFI](#) and [FIAF](#), and others involved in these collective efforts were able to convene face-to-face with the archivists and their families. The event facilitated a meaningful occasion to discuss the importance of preserving cultural heritage with AFI and FIAF's numerous contributors and supporters who were in attendance. Finally, it was a key opportunity to acknowledge the incredible work of AFI attorney Michael Mai and Case Manager Yama Rahimi in heading the relocation of the film archivists.

"The successful relocation of Sediqi, Hashimi and Lufti was an incredibly difficult task, requiring coordination with no less than 3 government agencies, multiple NGOs, and over 20 Afghans at risk of persecution," noted AFI co-Executive Director, [Sanjay Sethi](#). "Mr. Mai and Mr. Rahimi did not rest until the evacuation was successfully completed, and FIAF, Deutsche Kinemathek, and the German Federal Archives are all helping to ensure the successful reintegration of these incredible film

archivists."

"FIAF will continue to support these three Afghan colleagues in any way it can, and will strongly encourage its 173 affiliated film archives around the world to do so too," says FIAF Senior Administrator [Christophe Dupin](#). In addition to the three film archivists and their families, AFI has helped relocate over 215 Afghan artists and cultural workers and 359 dependent family members to Germany in the last two and a half years.

**About [Artistic Freedom Initiative \(AFI\)](#) :**

Led by immigration and human rights attorneys, Artistic Freedom Initiative (AFI) provides pro bono immigration representation and resettlement assistance for international artists at risk. Dedicated to safeguarding the right to artistic freedom, AFI was founded on the notion that artists are uniquely situated to positively and powerfully effect change, provided their voices can be heard. As artists are increasingly censored, imprisoned, restricted from moving freely across borders, tortured, or even killed, it is more critical than ever that we safeguard the right to artistic freedom and zealously champion the courageous artists who exercise it. To this end, AFI directly assists artists who have experienced persecution, censorship, or other restrictions on their freedom of expression, and supports artists who have demonstrated a commitment to advancing progressive social change and fundamental human rights. Since 2017, AFI has taken on over 1670 legal cases involving artists at risk. For more information please visit: [www.artisticfreedominitiative.org](http://www.artisticfreedominitiative.org)

**About [International Federation of Film Archives \(FIAF\)](#) :**

FIAF, the International Federation of Film Archives, has been dedicated to the preservation of, and access to, the world's film heritage since 1938. It brings together the world's leading non-profit institutions in this field. Its affiliates are committed to the rescue, collection, preservation, screening, and promotion of films, which are valued both as works of art and culture and as historical documents. When FIAF was founded in June 1938, it had four members. As of May 2018, it comprises 166 institutions in 75 countries – a reflection of the extent to which film heritage has become a world-wide concern. After nearly 80 years of experience in this field, FIAF has grown to be the most important global network of cinematheques and film archives. For more information please visit: [www.fiafnet.org](http://www.fiafnet.org)

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AFI & FIAF Celebrate a Triumph of Cultural Preservation

Meet the Relocated Afghan Film Archivists:

Hasibullah Sediqi, Fazel Jamil Hashimi, Mohammad Fayaz Lutfi

Sediqi now at Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek

Hashimi & Lutfi to Join National Archives of Germany

Celebrating Success at Deutsche Kinemathek

18 Months of Dedication & Coordination

Supported by the German Government & NGOs

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The Power of Collaboration: AFI & FIAF

Preserving Culture, Protecting Lives

Join Us in Celebrating Cultural Preservation

Learn More: [www.artisticfreedominitiative.org](http://www.artisticfreedominitiative.org) & [www.fiafnet.org](http://www.fiafnet.org)

Logos of AFI and FIAF