

**Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film
Statement by all Nominated Directors, 2017**

On behalf of all nominees, we would like to express our unanimous and emphatic disapproval of the climate of fanaticism and nationalism we see today in the U.S. and in so many other countries, in parts of the population and, most unfortunately of all, among leading politicians.

The fear generated by dividing us into genders, colors, religions and sexualities as a means to justify violence destroys the things that we depend on – not only as artists but as humans: the diversity of cultures, the chance to be enriched by something seemingly "foreign" and the belief that human encounters can change us for the better. These divisive walls prevent people from experiencing something simple but fundamental: from discovering that we are all not so different.

So we've asked ourselves: What can cinema do? Although we don't want to overestimate the power of movies, we *do* believe that no other medium can offer such deep insight into other people's circumstances and transform feelings of unfamiliarity into curiosity, empathy and compassion – even for those we have been told are our enemies.

Regardless of who wins the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film on Sunday, we refuse to think in terms of borders. We believe there is no best country, best gender, best religion or best color. We want this award to stand as a symbol of the unity between nations and the freedom of the arts.

Human rights are not something you have to apply for. They simply exist – for everybody. For this reason, we dedicate this award to all the people, artists, journalists and activists who are working to foster unity and understanding, and who uphold freedom of expression and human dignity – values whose protection is now more important than ever. By dedicating the Oscar to them, we wish to express to them our deep respect and solidarity.

Martin Zandvliet – Land of mine (Denmark)

Hannes Holm – A man called Ove (Sweden)

Asghar Farhadi – The Salesman (Iran)

Maren Ade - Toni Erdmann (Germany)

Martin Butler, Bentley Dean – Tanna (Australia)