

National Geographic Documentary Films Announces *The Cave* From Academy Award-Nominated Director Feras Fayyad
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In Partnership With the Award-Winning Producing Team at Danish Documentary, *The Cave* Unveils the Harrowing True Story of an Underground Hospital in War-Torn Syria and the Inspirational Female Doctor Running It

The Cave Will Release in Theaters This Fall

Following the recent greenlight announcements of **Rebuilding Paradise** from Academy Award-winning director Ron Howard and **The Untitled Thai Cave Rescue Project** (wt) from Academy Award-winning director Kevin Macdonald, National Geographic has announced it will continue to expand its feature documentary slate with **The Cave** — a powerful new film about a hidden secret underground hospital in Syria and the unprecedented female-led team of civilians and medical professionals who are risking their lives to provide medical care to the besieged local population. The announcement comes as the Museum of the Moving Image prepares to honor National Geographic for its accomplishments over the past few years, including the success of its newly formed documentary film unit — which recently won the Oscar and BAFTA for Best Documentary Feature of 2018 for **Free Solo**.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here:
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Academy Award-nominated filmmaker Feras Fayyad (“Last Man in Aleppo”) is directing **The Cave**, with Danish Documentary Films’ Kirstine Barfod (“Venus”) and Sigrid Dyekjær (“Something Better to Come”) as producers, and Eva Mulvad (“A Modern Man”), Pernille Rose Grønkjær (“The Monastery”) and Mikala Krogh (“The Newsroom – Off the Record”) executive producing. **The Cave** is slated for a fall 2019 release.

Ghouta, Syria - Dr. Amani in the underground tunnels. (Photo credit: National Geographic)

The film follows 30-year-old Dr. Amani, an aspiring pediatrician forced to end her studies and medical training due to the devastating war in Syria, as she becomes the appointed leader of a team of 130 medical practitioners in the secret hospital serving the 400,000 civilians of the besieged city of Al Ghouta from 2012 to 2018. Due to the nonstop onslaught of conventional and chemical warfare, brutalized and displaced victims constantly flood the subterranean haven through secret entrances and an intricate network of tunnels. Despite the limited supply of medical resources, Dr. Amani and her team work tirelessly to restore health and hope.

“While I was detained by the Syrian regime for a critical film I made, I witnessed the suppression and torturing of women, an inhuman shameless pride of cruelty, in prison. Not only because they were prisoners but because they were women. I also observed one of the most atrocious war crimes in modern history when the Syrian regime used chemical weapons to attack Al Ghouta in 2013. These experiences were shockingly

frightening and unforgettable, but even worse, the rest of the world looked on silently,” said Fayyad. “I knew I had to challenge the inaction and I felt morally responsible to expose the effects of the war crimes. My vision for **The Cave** was to paint a human picture of the Syrian War through the eyes of these unsuspecting female heroes, and for the film to be a global call to action for response to this humanitarian crisis.”

“This is an important story for women today and for the coming generations. It is about women who want independence and change in life,” said Dr. Amani. “It is my hope that the more people see it, the closer we are to ending the war and achieving justice. Something has to change.”

“National Geographic Documentary Films, a brand with such a pristine reputation for powerful storytelling, has inspired us, and we are thrilled to be working together,” said Barfod and Dyekjær. “With their support, we too hope to bring as much attention as possible to the crisis in Syria and shed a light on the gender inequality in the region through Dr. Amani’s story.”

“Dr. Amani is a true hero. We are honored to share her story with the world and to ensure that her team’s unwavering dedication and commitment in the most horrendous of circumstances is witnessed by the largest global audience possible,” added National Geographic Documentary Films’ Carolyn Bernstein.

National Geographic Documentary Films has achieved remarkable success in a very short time. Most recently, the critically acclaimed film **Free Solo** won both the Academy Award and the BAFTA Award for Best Documentary Feature — in addition to CAS, MPSE, Critics’ Choice and Cinema Eye wins. In 2017, two films released under the Documentary Films banner, **Jane** and **LA 92**, made the Oscar shortlist for Best Documentary Feature, and both won Emmys: **LA 92** for Special Merit and **Jane** for Best Director and Best Cinematography.

For National Geographic Documentary Films, executive producers are Carolyn Bernstein and Ryan Harrington. For National Geographic Channel, executive producer is Matt Renner.

About National Geographic Documentary Films

National Geographic Documentary Films is committed to bringing the world premium, feature documentaries that cover timely, provocative and globally relevant stories from the very best documentary filmmakers in the world. National Geographic Documentary Films is a division of National Geographic Partners, a joint venture between Disney and the National Geographic Society. Furthering knowledge and understanding of our world has been the core purpose of National Geographic for 131 years, and now we are committed to going deeper, pushing boundaries, going further for our consumers ... and reaching millions of people around the world in 172 countries and 43 languages every month as we do it. NGP returns 27 percent of our proceeds to the nonprofit National Geographic Society to fund work in the areas of science, exploration, conservation and education. For more information visit natgeotv.com or nationalgeographic.com, or find us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/natgeodocs), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/natgeodocs), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/natgeodocs), [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/natgeodocs), [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/natgeodocs) and [Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com/natgeodocs).

About Danish Documentary

For over a decade, Danish Documentary Production (founded in 2007) has been an international key player in the world of high-end cinematic documentary films. The company is run by three talented directors and their producer. The directors are Pernille Rose Grønkjær, behind such films as “The Monastery – Mr. Vig and the Nun” (IDFA winner), “Genetic Me” and “Hunting for Hedonia”; Eva Mulvad, who directed “A Modern Man,” “The Good Life” and “Enemies of Happiness” (Sundance and IDFA winner); and Mikala Krogh, director of “A Normal Life” (CPH:DOX audience award), “Cairo Garbage,” “Everything Is Relative” and “The Newsroom – Off the Record.” The producer who oversees the company is Sigrid Dyekjær, who has produced all of its recent films, along with several others as well.

About Feras Fayyad

The Academy Award-nominated filmmaker Feras Fayyad has directed and edited a number of films, both documentary and fiction; the latest, “Last Men in Aleppo” (2017) won the award for Best Current Affairs Documentary at the annual News and Documentary Emmy Awards in 2018. Fayyad has received international recognition for his work on contemporary Syrian issues and the political transformation of the Arab world.

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