

RESOLUTION 21: ARTISTIC FREEDOM

Given that:

Across the world artists continue to face censorship, enforced exile, imprisonment, torture or even death.

However, performers living under repressive regimes continue to create great art and fight for the right to work, despite suffering severe hardship.

In the UK Equity's International Committee for Artists Freedom coordinates campaigns in solidarity with artists facing persecution and oppression around the world, and provide first-line support to artists in immediate danger. Recent high profile campaigns have focussed on attacks on freedom of expression in Iran, Belarus, Syria, Turkey and Burma. FIA has been an invaluable source of support for this work.

Notable successes include the release of Burmese comedian Zarganar from prison on 12th October 2011 following intense campaigning led by performer's unions and human rights organisations. FIA affiliates throughout the world distributed over 30,000 postcards, calling on the Burmese authorities to release Zarganar and he was awarded honorary life membership of Equity UK in May 2011. Equally, FIA contributed to the successful campaign in support of Iranian actress Marzieh Vafamehr, sentenced to one year in jail and severe physical punishment for her role in a feature film that was banned in her country.

The 20th Congress of the International Federation of Actors resolves:

- To thank the FIA Secretariat and affiliate unions for their efforts in support of the campaign to free Zarganar and their active response to similar initiatives in support of artistic freedom.
- To reaffirm FIA's commitment to campaigning to secure the right to freedom of expression for all performers, in all countries.
- To encourage affiliates to establish their own national campaigns to promote and support freedom of expression campaigns.
- To encourage FIA's active participation in international networks such as ArtsFex committed to the protection and promotion of freedom of artistic and creative expression and the fight against any form of prosecution, censorship and physical or mental harassment against artists and performers - with the goal of increasing awareness about such occurrences in the media, among political bodies, human rights and free speech organisations as well as the general public.
- To encourage FIA to develop reactive and effective tools to generate petitions in favour of censored or persecuted artists, taking advantage of the latest technological developments and a future uplift of its website.