



The I Declare World Peace Project Praises "The Secret Reading Club of Kabul"

The Secret Reading Club of Kabul won the NORDIC:DOX Award at the Copenhagen documentary film festival held in Denmark in March, 2026.

BROOKLYN, N.Y. - May 26, 2026 - [PRLog](#) -- A key metric for peace cited by The Global Peace Index (GPI) (Institute for Economics & Peace) is equality of education, status, treatment and opportunity between men and women; between girls and boys. Gender inequality contributes to Afghanistan's current GPI rank of 158 out of 163 countries; the sixth least peaceful country on earth.

This past March, *The Secret Reading Club of Kabul*, co-directed by Shakiba Adil, an Afghani woman living in Finland, and Finland's Elina Hirvonen, won the NORDIC:DOX Award at Copenhagen's documentary film festival. The film won for its overall production quality and undeniably powerful content. Per the festival, the film "*exposes the brutal dismantling of women's rights under an authoritarian regime. In doing so, [the film] affirms the power of documentary cinema to make injustice visible and the voice of the oppressed heard.*"

Rita Gelber, president of #IDWP, reached at her home, explained that "our project praises *The Secret Reading Club of Kabul* because every voice that exposes injustice is a voice in the chorus for peace and deserves praise. This film presents such a voice. We have previously supported authors, musicians and artists, and this is our first 'endorsement' of a film."

The Secret Reading Club of Kabul follows a group of young women in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. They secretly gather to read banned books, including *The Diary of Anne Frank*, which serves as key inspiration, and they write their own diaries to document their reality. The Copenhagen judges recognized the film's very skilled and coherently edited look at young Afghan women risking their lives. Women and girls should not have to risk their lives just to read books.

Co-directors Adil and Hirvonen tell a riveting and thoroughly engrossing story, as recognized by The Hollywood Reporter in its review on March 14, 2026: "The story is interwoven with insight into director Adil's own journey. As a girl, she grew up under the first Taliban regime, and after the fall of the Taliban, she became the first woman to appear on Afghan television. Notes the festival: 'After being forced to flee her homeland twice, she has now dedicated her film to the new generation facing the same oppression she herself has endured.'" The authenticity that Adil brings to the story is just one of the entire "bouquet" of factors that make this documentary the gripping story it is.

<https://cphdox.dk/film/the-secret-reading-club-of-kabul/>

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