Goodbye Julia

EIMAN YOUSIF  SIRAN RIAK  NAZAR GOMAA  GER DUANY

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY
Mohamed Kordofani
GOODBYE JULIA

Written & Directed by
Mohamed Kordofani

For Sales and Distribution
MAD Solutions
18 Salah El-Din St., 3rd fl., Zamalek,
Postal Code: 11211, Cairo, Egypt
Tel: +2 0227357937
+2 0227363505 / +2 0227369130
Distribution@mad-solutions.com
Info@mad-solutions.com
http://mad.film

International Press
Alibi Communications
Brigitta Portier & Gary Walsh
brigittaportier@alibicommunications.be
garywalsh@alibicommunications.be

Whatsapp Numbers
+32477982584
+32495773882

PHOTOS CLIPS AND PRESSKIT DOWNLOADABLE ON WWW.MAD-DISTRIBUTION.FILM
Logline

Just before the secession of South Sudan, a married former singer from the north seeks redemption for causing the death of a southern man by hiring his oblivious wife as her maid.
Synopsis

Wracked by guilt after covering up a murder, Mona, a northern Sudanese retired singer in a tense marriage tries to make amends by taking in the deceased’s southern Sudanese widow, Julia, and her son, Daniel, into her home. Unable to confess her transgressions to Julia, Mona decides to leave the past behind and adjust to a new status quo, unaware that the country’s turmoil may find its way into her home and put her face to face with her sins.
A Sudanese filmmaker who made NYERKUK, KEJERS PRISON, and A TOUR IN LOVE REPUBLIC

NYERKUK won the Black Elephant Award for Best Sudanese Film, NAAS Award for Best Arab Film at the Carthage Film Festival, Jury Award at the Oran International Arab Film Festival, and Arnone-Belavite Pellegrini Award at the FCAAA in Milan

KEJERS PRISON was screened during the Sudanese revolution at the sit-in square in front of thousands of protesters

A TOUR IN LOVE REPUBLIC was the first pro-revolution film to be broadcasted on Sudan’s national TV

His latest film THIS IS SUDAN was commissioned by Sudan’s former prime minister to promote Sudan’s potential for investment

About Mohamed Kordofani

A Sudanese filmmaker who made NYERKUK, KEJERS PRISON, and A TOUR IN LOVE REPUBLIC

NYERKUK won the Black Elephant Award for Best Sudanese Film, NAAS Award for Best Arab Film at the Carthage Film Festival, Jury Award at the Oran International Arab Film Festival, and Arnone-Belavite Pellegrini Award at the FCAAA in Milan

KEJERS PRISON was screened during the Sudanese revolution at the sit-in square in front of thousands of protesters

A TOUR IN LOVE REPUBLIC was the first pro-revolution film to be broadcasted on Sudan’s national TV

His latest film THIS IS SUDAN was commissioned by Sudan’s former prime minister to promote Sudan’s potential for investment
The racism that was practiced for many decades from most Northern Arabs, government and people, was a major reason for the southerners choosing to secede. This was most evident when the results revealed a whopping %99 of Southerners wanted to separate. It is not possible for an entire people to choose secession for any other reason.

I realized then that I was somehow responsible for that decision, for all my life in Khartoum I had known no one from the south except for some domestic workers as if we had practiced social apartheid.

Writing this film was part of a continuous effort to get rid of that inherited racism, motivated by a sense of guilt and a desire for reconciliation and a call for it, even if it seems late.

Reconciliation is not only necessary with Southerners, but we need it as a national project to preserve what is left of Sudan and to build a new national identity that is proud of the values of humanity, coexistence, and justice instead of race, tribe, and gender.

Additionally, my duty as an artist made it imperative for me to document history from a societal angle rather than political narratives, in which the picture alone is not complete.

GOODBYE JULIA is a difficult journey through the collective memory of Sudanese and South Sudanese peoples that deals with the normal everyday living of two women linked together by unusual social and political situations that impacted them greatly. Its narrative is inspired by the stages of reconciliation, and it discusses themes such as remorse, compensation, disclosure, confession of guilt, and repentance for it.

The film examined the dynamics of the complicated interaction between northerners and southerners, as well as the conflict between progressivism and conservatism, in its models, and addresses the process of change that we must go through in order to reconcile and heal as people and as a society.

The film was also quite challenging to make, as we had to contend with a military coup and non-stop protests as well as the lack of infrastructure. But at the same time, this revolution is trying to change concepts first before changing the regime, which makes the timing ideal for showing the film not only to the Sudanese audience but to the entire world, as many societies of all kinds are suffering in one way or another from the absence of justice and the problems of coexistence and polarization.
Interview with
Mohamed Kordofani
Why did you decide to address the issue of the separation of North and South in your film?

The film deals with separation more comprehensively, not only the separation of the South. It also deals with the separation of husbands, children, friends, and loved ones. But when talking about the secession of the south, I think that it was the most important evidence of the problems of partisanship in all its forms and the crisis of cultural and religious identity that Sudan suffers from. This is a call to maintain the unity of what remains of Sudan, which is still mired in the same dilemma that must be handled on several levels. The most important of which is the social level and the desire for reconciliation as citizens and abandoning unfair privileges for the sake of a better homeland for all, which requires opening the wound to clean it and then treat it. It needs people to talk about it. This is the role of art in general, and cinema in particular, as it is the most effective in addressing the conscience of societies.

I also want this to happen before it is too late, and before history repeats itself. Marginalization, oppression, absence of justice, masculinity, tribal, and religious and racist bigotry are all problems that Sudan still suffers from and the result of their continuation is always bad.
Certainly, I am terrified; fear is inevitable in these situations; yet, my belief in my viewpoint and conviction about the importance and urgency of the subject outweigh my anxiety. That was before the conflict, which erupted the day after the film was unveiled at Cannes.

Now, while I worry for my family, friends, and colleagues in Sudan, I’m worried that some people may take this film out of context and relate it to the conflicts between the army and the Rapid Support Forces. The war in the South was due to racism, marginalization, and identity fanaticism. As for what is happening now, it is a struggle for power to preserve the interests of individuals. The army is still led by the security committee that used to protect the ousted Omar Al-Bashir at the time of the Islamists. As for the Rapid Support Forces, it is a militia that earns its living from wars made by the same army that is fighting it now. Both of them do not care at all about the people and the interest of the country, they only care about their wealth.

This combination is not easy and involves a lot of experimentation and risk, and the film may lose both audiences. I also wanted to present a film starring women who suffer from societal oppression, but despite that, they are strong, interesting, and admirable. On a personal level, making a feature film needed dedication, and I was initially an aviation engineer who worked full-time at Gulf Airlines for 16 years, and while art has always been my passion, aviation has a solid financial return, which made leaving tough, especially because I had two daughters. However, in 2020 I decided to leave aviation completely to focus on making this film and supporting the cinematic movement in Sudan. So I returned to Khartoum and established Klozium Studios, in which I invested what I owned and participated in the production of this film in terms of execution and financing, which made my financial situation very critical in the last two years. So, leaving a field such as aviation and establishing a production company, writing and directing the first film, all at the same time seemed like a great risk or a reckless adventure.

Do you have any concerns because you are dealing with a very sensitive subject?

Certainly, I am terrified; fear is inevitable in these situations; yet, my belief in my viewpoint and conviction about the importance and urgency of the subject outweigh my anxiety. That was before the conflict, which erupted the day after the film was unveiled at Cannes.

Now, while I worry for my family, friends, and colleagues in Sudan, I’m worried that some people may take this film out of context and relate it to the conflicts between the army and the Rapid Support Forces. The war in the South was due to racism, marginalization, and identity fanaticism. As for what is happening now, it is a struggle for power to preserve the interests of individuals. The army is still led by the security committee that used to protect the ousted Omar Al-Bashir at the time of the Islamists. As for the Rapid Support Forces, it is a militia that earns its living from wars made by the same army that is fighting it now. Both of them do not care at all about the people and the interest of the country, they only care about their wealth.

What was the biggest challenge you had in mind before working on the film and how did you avoid it?

The most difficult aspect of filmmaking for me was balancing the styles of art house cinema and mainstream cinema. We don’t have our own cinema in Sudan, so the public is used to Bollywood and Hollywood. I wanted to address them in the language they liked. I did not want to make a film that only festival audiences and juries would see or understand.

I wanted to develop a film that everyone could see, even if they were merely looking for entertainment. I wanted the film to be thrilling, with a storyline that is mysterious, has an appealing rhythm, murder, and music, but not at the expense of its artistic value and not to deal with complicated subjects like identity, racism, and the conflict between conservatism and progressivism in a shallow or naïve way, which I always kept in mind in my writing and directorial choices.
The Cast

**Eiman Yousif (Mona)**
- Sudanese theater actress and singer
- Acted in a number of plays that raised awareness and discussed social issues in Sudan, including ALF LAILA WI LLYA by Walid Al-Alfi
- A qanun player and vocalist in Bait Al Oud, which performed at the Opera House in Cairo

**Siran Riak (Julia)**
- A supermodel from South Sudan
- Pursued a career in modeling after university and was crowned Ms. South Sudan in 2014 and Ms. Africa/Malaysia in 2017
- Represented BVLGARI in Dubai, where she wore a dress worth 15€m
- Modeled for major brands like Tiffany & Co and appeared in VOGUE and BAZAAR

**Nazar Gomaa (Akram)**
- A graduate of the Sudan Academy for Telecommunication Science and has been an actor and director since the 1990s
- Worked on a number of TV series, such as HIKAYAT SUDANIYA
- Acted in multiple theater productions, including KANABAT HABEBTI and MASAT AL HALAJ

**Ger Duany (Majier)**
- A former child soldier and refugee
- Built a career in the US, appearing in a number of films, including THE NILE HILTON INCIDENT and THE GOOD LIE alongside the award-winning Reese Witherspoon
- Co-produced and starred in the documentary GER: TO BE SEPARATE.
- Was appointed the UNHCR's Goodwill Ambassador for the East and Horn of Africa Region on 2015’s World Refugee Day
Main Producer

Amjad Abu Alala

- A Sudanese director and producer whose first feature film was YOU WILL DIE AT TWENTY
- The film won the Lion of the Future Luigi De Laurentis Award for Best Debut Film in Venice and the El Gouna Golden Star for Best Film among others. The film was also Sudan’s first-ever submission to the Oscars
- Directed and produced many short films, including ORANGE AND COFFEE (2004), FEATHERS OF BIRDS (2007), TEENA (2009), and STUDIO (2012)
- Co-produced Amr Gamal’s THE BURDENERED, which was the first Yemeni film to be featured at the Berlin International Film Festival’s Panorama section
- Produced Mohamed Kordofani’s GOODBYE JULIA, which is the first Sudanese film to be featured at the Cannes International Film Festival

Why GOODBYE JULIA?

I was drawn to GOODBYE JULIA from the beginning of its development phase and was simply blown away by what it set out to achieve in terms of its vision and story. And now that we’re at this point, it’s clear that I bet my money on the right horse.

After the success of YOU WILL DIE AT TWENTY, I decided that everything I would do beyond that point would be for the sole purpose of elevating Sudanese cinema to new heights and marketing it more effectively to the rest of the world. Me and my compatriots some of whom I’ve worked with on GOODBYE JULIA are adamant that we achieve this end and tell these stories from a part of the world that is often overlooked.
Producer

Mohammed Alomda

• A Sudanese producer, director, and film programmer for the Sudan Independent Film Festival

• Directed the short film THE LAST GAME, which was screened at the Doha Tribeca Film Festival

• Co-produced YOU WILL DIE AT TWENTY with Abu Alala and Amr Gamal’s THE BURDENED which was the first Yemeni film to be featured at the Berlin International Film Festival’s Panorama section

• Co-produced Mohamed Kordofani’s GOODBYE JULIA, which is the first Sudanese film to be featured at the Cannes International Film Festival

• Currently working as a producer for the Egyptian film "Ravens of the City" directed by Adham El Sherif
The Cinematographer

Pierre de Villiers

• A South African cinematographer with multiple awards

• His short MTHUNZI premiered at the Locarno Film Festival and won Best Cinematography at the European Film Awards

• Worked on the feature film THIS IS NOT A BURIAL, IT’S A RESURRECTION directed by Lemohang Jeremiah Mosese

• The film won the Special Jury Award for Visionary Filmmaking at Sundance and Best Cinematography at the Montclair International Film Festival and African Movie Academy Awards. It was also Lesotho’s first-ever entry to the Oscars and the Golden Globes

The Editor

Heba Othman

• An Egyptian editor who worked on a number of feature films, including COMING FORTH BY DAY, OUT OF ORDER, and YOU WILL DIE AT TWENTY

• Worked on CURFEW by Amir Ramses, which premiered at the Cairo International Film Festival

• Edited THE BURDENED — the first Yemeni film to screen at the Berlin International Film Festival

• Edited GOODBYE JULIA — the first Sudanese film to screen at the Cannes International Film Festival
Workshops

- EAVE Workshop at the Cairo International Film Festival
- Cinephilia Bound at the Cannes Film Festival
- Follow The Nile Workshop by Robert Bosch
- Durban Film Mart
- Cinegouna at El Gouna Film Festival

Funds & Grants

Development

- New Directors New Films Festival - Pitching Competition Prize
- Arab Fund For Arts & Culture - Development Grant
- Malmö Arab Film Festival - Development Grant
- Participation in the Global Media Makers Program organized by Film Independent, Los Angeles
- Four awards at El Gouna Film Festival’s CineGouna Platform
  - MAD Solutions award at the CineGouna SpringBoard
  - A certificate from the El Gouna Cinema Platform
  - New Century Prize (10,000$)
  - The Mentorship Prize presented by IEFTA

Production

- Supported from the Red Sea Fund
- Supported by Paris Region
- Supported by ARRI - International Support Program
- Supported by the Film und Medienstiftung NRW
Festivals

* 2023 Cannes Film Festival
  (World Premiere - Un Certain Regard section)
Cast & Crew

Written and Directed by
Mohamed Kordofani

Cast
Eiman Yousif, Siran Riak, Nazar Gomaa, Ger Duany, Stephanos James Peter

DOP
Pierre de Villiers

Editor
Heba Othman

Colorist
Dirk Meier

Music Producer & Composer
Mazin Hamid

Sound Designer
Rana Eid

Sound Mixer
Rawad Hobeika

Costume Designer
Simba Elmur

Production Designer
Issa Kandil

Producer
Amjad Abu Alala

Producer
Mohammed Alomda

Assistant Producer
Rua Osman

Line Producer
Samo Hussain

Production Company
Station Films

A Co-Production With
Red Star Films, Die Gesellschaft DGS, Klozium Studios, Dolce Vita Films, Cinewaves Films, Ambient Light, CULT, and RiverFlower

Co-Producers
Baho Bakhsh, Safei Eldin Mahmoud, Michael Henrichs, Khalid Awaad, Mohamed Kordofani, Marc Irner, Faisal Baltyuor, Ali Elarabi, Adham El Sherif, and Issraa Elkogali Häggström

In co-production with
MAD Solutions, Red Sea, and CANAL+ International

Worldwide Distribution
MAD Solutions

وداعاً جوليا

Goodbye Julia

Written & Directed by
Mohamed Kordofani