

# Exceptional performances lift 'Seeking Haven for Mr Rambo'

Arab NewsGautaman Bhaskaran Chennai12 Sep 2024

A haunting and disturbing movie, "Seeking Haven for Mr Rambo" by director Khalid Mansour played at the recent 81st edition of the Venice Film Festival.

The work was developed through Saudi Arabia's Red Sea Lodge program and supported by the Red Sea Fund. On the surface, the work, which unfolds in Egypt's capital city of Cairo with its 23 million citizens, may look placidly calm. But Cairo (which translates to "The Conqueror") can be cold and forbidding. One among the teeming multitude is Hassan (Essam Omar), trying his best to save his dog and best friend, Rambo.

This is the first Egyptian film to screen at the Venice Film Festival in 12 years and it tells the story of Hassan and his mother (Sama Ibrahim) who have been living in a flat for years. But their peace is disturbed when their landlord, an unfeeling brash young man, wants to demolish the flat. Things come to a breaking point when the landlord confronts Hassan on the street only to be attacked by Rambo.

Mansour, who penned the script along with Mohamed El-Hossieny, draws an apt parallel between Omar and his pet dog. Both are strays and have to fight in the harsh environment of Cairo just to survive.

Although the story line is thin and not quite novel, Hassan's\* character has been written with a great deal of brilliance. He is part of a defeated generation, which is fighting to find a ray of freedom in a suffocating social setup. In the midst of all this, Hassan learns to confront the ghosts from his past as he gets more and more nervous, unsure about the fate of his dear Rambo. An exceptional performance here by both the master

and the pet in a 102-minute work that has a kind of realism rarely seen in Egyptian cinema.