# NEDA

## THE INTERPRETER




**A feature film by Ashkan Najafi**
based on a screenplay
by Ashkan Najafi and Stefan Gieren

**Cast:** Pegah Ferydoni, Navid Negahban, Lara Wolf, Anne-Kathrin Gummich, Jan Georg Schütte, among others

supported by
MOIN – Film Fund Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein
nordmedia and DFFF

In co-production with NDR

Produced by Stefan Gieren, Storybay Hamburg

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# FACT SHEET

**NEDA - The Interpreter**

Feature Film, Germany, 2026, 107', 2K DCP, Scope, 5.1

„Iranian-born Neda is trying to build a new life in Hamburg and leave behind her past in an Iranian women's prison. Working as an interpreter for the immigration office, she unexpectedly comes face to face with one of her former tormentors. Suddenly, the victim holds the power over the perpetrator – and must confront the question: What is the true price of justice?"

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| DIRECTOR: | Ashkan Najafi |
| SCREENPLAY: | Ashkan Najafi, Stefan Gieren |
| CO-WRITER: | Mina Farzaneh |
| CINEMATOGRAPHY: | Clemens Majunke |
| EDITORS: | Hoda Muini, Mehrdad Muini |
| MUSIC: | Florian Tessloff |
| PRODUCTION DESIGN: | Kay Kulke, Violetta Willie Hamburg |
| COSTUME DESIGN: | Petra Kilian |
| MAKE-UP & HAIR: | Pia Karlotta Paprzik |
| CASTING: | Sarah Lee |
| SOUND: | Tim Stephan |
| SOUND DESIGN: | Kai Storck |
| RE-RECORDING MIXER: | Lasse Kröger |
| COLORIST: | Ronney Afortu, BVK |
| ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: | Ires Jung |
| PRODUCTION MANAGERS: | Dariush Ebadi, Dirk Eickhoff |
| PRODUCER: | Stefan Gieren |
| CAST: | Pegah Ferydoni - NEDA |
| | Navid Negahban - HAMID |
| | Lara Wolf - ASSU |
| | Anne-Kathrin Gummich - EVA |
| | Jan Georg Schütte - WREDE |
| | Jasmin Shakeri, Roxana Samadi, Negah Amiri and others |

Produced by The StoryBay (Story Bay Media UG), Hamburg
Funded by MOIN Film Fund Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, nordmedia and DFFF
In co-production with Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR)
Produced as part of the NDR talent programme Nordlichter

## SYNOPSIS

Neda has come to Hamburg as a political refugee from Iran. In the women's prison of Qarchak, she endured horrific abuse that continues to haunt her, even as she tries to build a normal life and pursue her passion for photography.

Working as an interpreter for the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), she assists asylum seekers in their hearings. One day, she is confronted with a face from her past: Hamid, one of her former interrogators from Qarchak. He has fled to Germany with his daughter, hiding his crimes behind a fabricated life story. Neda cannot prove what she knows – until she realizes that, as his interpreter, she holds power over him. She can give him a second chance... or take it away. For the first time since her release, she must confront her most painful memories.

Neda meets Assu, a Kurdish activist who was also tortured in an Iranian prison, and finds herself drawn to the young woman's fierce determination. Persuaded by Assu, Neda joins other former inmates in a plan to abduct Hamid and put him on trial in a clandestine tribunal. But when Hamid's daughter lies dying in the hospital, Neda can no longer accept the path of violence – and convinces the others to find another way forward.



## BACKGROUND - IRANIAN OPPOSITION IN GERMANY

The slogan “Woman, Life, Freedom” (Zan, Zendegi, Azadi) became a global symbol of Iranian resistance in the autumn of 2022, following the death of Mahsa Amini. Sparked by massive protests in Iran, it inspired a worldwide solidarity movement – led in large part by women – opposing compulsory veiling, political oppression, and systematic human rights violations.

In Germany, and particularly in Hamburg, the Iranian exile community is highly active: organizing demonstrations, art exhibitions, concerts, and theatre projects to raise awareness of the situation in Iran. Hamburg holds a special place in this context, having long been home to the Islamic Centre Hamburg (IZH), which Germany’s domestic intelligence agency classified as an outpost of Tehran. The IZH was banned in 2024 for extremist and antisemitic activities.

German security authorities have warned for years about the activities of the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence (MOIS) and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) within the country. These activities include surveillance, intimidation, targeted espionage, and – as international cases have shown – kidnappings and assassination plots against regime opponents. Hamburg, with its Iranian community, diplomatic presence, and cultural hubs, is a focal point for such influence operations.

The film NEDA – The Interpreter draws on this reality, dramatizing the threats faced by Iranians in exile while also portraying the hope and courage of the opposition. Neda’s journey – from a withdrawn life to active confrontation – mirrors the delicate balance many Iranian exiles navigate: protecting their own freedom while risking everything in the pursuit of justice.



## PRODUCTION NOTES

Ashkan Najafi, a Hamburg-based former assistant director to Mohammad Rassoulof, makes his feature debut with NEDA – The Interpreter, the story of an Iranian translator's fate, produced within the Nordlichter program by NDR, MOIN, and Nordmedia.

The lead roles are played by Pegah Ferydoni (Turkish for Beginners, Women Without Men, A Dysfunctional Cat) and Navid Negahban (The Night Agent, Tehran, Homeland).

The film brings to Germany the conflicts that have driven an entire generation of young Iranians to the streets again and again, despite the regime's brutal repression. It makes their fears, longings, anger, and despair tangible for a German audience – while drawing attention to the fact that, despite political sanctions, the regime is still able to operate far too freely in Germany, intimidating, threatening, and even harming opposition members here.

Storybay is a boutique film production company specializing in emerging international arthouse cinema with a strong focus on social impact topics. Our films have screened at numerous international festivals, including the Berlinale, Locarno, and Karlovy Vary, and have been honored with two Student Academy Awards, a German Film Award (Lola), and an Academy Award nomination.



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# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

*von Ashkan Najafi*

Since 2009, people in Iran have been fighting for freedom, human dignity and democratic self-determination. The "Woman, Life, Freedom" movement and the bloody crackdown on the protests in January 2026 show the price they pay for it. Many people have been killed, thousands arrested. Many prisoners still face torture and execution.

Against this backdrop, the central question of our film NEDA takes on a particular urgency: What happens when a victim of state violence encounters their former tormentor again in a democratic country?

After her imprisonment and the experience of sexualised violence in Iran, Neda fled to Germany. Today she works as an interpreter in asylum proceedings. When she finds herself face to face with her former tormentor during a hearing, the life she has so painstakingly rebuilt begins to falter.

Neda fled a country in which the law was abused to oppress her. Now she lives in a state governed by the rule of law, which must also protect the rights of her tormentor. Can she be expected to remain neutral? And how can a personal sense of justice be reconciled with the principles of the rule of law?

We wanted neither to reduce Neda to the role of victim nor to portray the perpetrator as an inhuman monster. Wanting to understand a person does not mean justifying what he has done. We are interested in the contradictions of human behaviour, the consequences of personal decisions and the limits of forgiveness and justice.

NEDA is not a classic revenge thriller but a multi-layered psychological portrait of a woman who has to find her own way between her past, responsibility and the wish for a self-determined life.

At a time when people in Iran are still being persecuted for seeking their freedom, the film asks a fundamental question: Can we hold on to the principles of human dignity and the rule of law even when they protect those who once did violence to us?


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