



76. Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Berlinale Competition

SALVATION

A FILM BY EMİN ALPER

INTERNATIONAL PUBLICITY

Manlin Sterner

International Rescue PR
manlin@manlin.se

Charles McDonald

charles@charlesmcdonald.co.uk

INTERNATIONAL SALES

Lucky Number

sales@luckynumber.fr

SHORT SYNOPSIS

In a remote village high in the Turkish mountains, the return of an exiled clan reignites a decades-old land dispute.

Dormant resentments resurface and Mesut, the local leader's brother, is seized by unsettling visions believed to be divine warnings. As religious convictions, power struggles and tensions surge in the community, **will they move toward tragedy or salvation?**

LONG SYNOPSIS

High in the mountains of Eastern Turkey, two neighboring Kurdish villages face one another: Upper Pingan on a mountain peak and Lower Pingan on the plateau below. Years ago, the Bezari clan was forcibly displaced while their rivals, the Hazerans, became village guards and remained in Upper Pingan. Over the years, the Hazerans grew wealthy by cultivating the fields left behind by the Bezaris in Lower Pingan.

As the armed conflict in the region subsides, the Bezaris return to reclaim their territory. While Sheikh Ferit, the leader of Hazerans, calls for peaceful coexistence, even at the cost of conceding the land, his older brother Mesut takes a far more confrontational stance. Ferit's position fuels growing resentment among his people, who fear for their land and their future.

Haunted by unsettling dreams he interprets as divine warnings, Mesut openly challenges his brother's leadership. Caught between the fear of losing all they possess and long-suppressed rage, Hazerans stand at a crossroads: **will they be dragged toward tragedy, or will they finally attain salvation?**

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

In 2009 in a village in the Kurdish region of Türkiye, twelve members of one family raided a wedding and killed 44 people including children and women. This shocking event is the main inspiration of "Salvation." How could a group of people get together to wipe out another group? How could they convince each other and motivate themselves to commit such a heinous act? And how could they plan and take action? In pursuing these haunting questions, I found myself searching for answers not only to this massacre, but also to other mass killings and genocides in history. The result is a narrative that attempts to recreate a massacre in a small microcosm, with references to modern history of colonialism and nationalism.

All the murderous leaders believe that they have a mission, whether it is religious or secular; and most of them believe that they are saving their people. They justify themselves as the chosen ones. And in reality, they are often chosen by their own people. The people who feel desperate, threatened, fragile, and in need of strong leaders bring them to power for the heavy-handed solutions.

In our film, Mesut is a lonely man, haunted by nightmares motivated by sexual jealousy and uneasy with his status, who becomes a sought-after leader for the hardliners. The road to power is paved by them. The only thing needed is supernatural messages which will be delivered to him.

The messages come through dreams (as in the case of most mystic religious leaders). So the dreams in the film are devices through which both Mesut and the villagers convince themselves (in a half-conscious way) that a new leader with a new mission is coming. Secondly, dreams reflect the fear and paranoia of the people. The nightmares start with Mesut but quickly spread to the people, reflecting a primal fear of survival. They create a terrifying ultimatum: if they do not act swiftly, they will be enslaved, or wiped out by the 'enemy'.





Beyond the narrative, dreams determine the stylistic approach of the film. By mixing subjective and objective points of view and using a spiral of parallel dreams, the film immerses the audience in the world of our anti-heroes. This distinctive style is intended to help us understand the psychological "madness" that makes such a crime possible.

I believe this story has global relevance. We are living through a moment where ethnic hostility, 'survivalist' claims over land and the feeling of a constant threat from an 'enemy' culminated in the genocide in Palestine. While our film operates on a micro-level, Mesut's personal mission is essentially the same as the religious mission of settler-colonialism: it is a 'salvation' that requires the erasure of others.

This isn't an isolated phenomenon; it's a global pattern. We see it in the brutal crackdowns and state-led killings in Iran, where 'preserving the mission' justifies the murder of its own people. We see it in the West, where populist leaders scapegoat migrants and minorities to manufacture a sense of national emergency. The rhetoric is always identical: they tell their people that for "us" to survive, "they" must be eliminated. The world is becoming increasingly unsafe under the rule of these erratic, power-obsessed leaders who stand on the brink of dragging not only their own countries, but the entire world, into catastrophe.

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY



Emin Alper holds a PhD in Modern Turkish History and is a filmmaker whose work explores the intersection of political tension and collective psychology. Over the last decade, Alper has established himself as a prominent voice in world cinema, with all four of his previous features premiering at the three major international film festivals.

His debut, *BEYOND THE HILL* (2012), won the Caligari Film Prize at the Berlinale Forum, followed by *FRENZY* (2015), which received the Special Jury Prize in Competition at the Venice Film Festival. Alper returned to the Berlinale Competition in 2019 with *A TALE OF THREE SISTERS*, while his fourth feature, *BURNING DAYS* (2022), premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in the Un Certain Regard section. He currently serves as the Artistic Director of Sinematek/Cinema House in Istanbul. *SALVATION* (2026) marks his second film in the Berlinale Competition.

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

2026: **Salvation** (Kurtuluş)
2022: **Burning Days** (Kurak Günler)
2019: **A Tale of Three Sisters** (Kız Kardeşler)
2015: **Frenzy** (Abluka)
2012: **Beyond The Hill** (Tepenin Ardı)

ACTORS' BIOGRAPHIES



CANER CİNDORUK - MESUT

Caner Cindoruk is an accomplished Turkish theatre, film, and television actor. Raised in a culturally engaged family, he developed an early passion for literature and the performing arts, leading to an extensive career across stage and screen. He gained widespread recognition through prominent television series in Türkiye and internationally. His filmography includes acclaimed titles such as *Kor*, *Rhino Season*, and *Dar Elbise*, reflecting a long-standing commitment to complex, character-driven narratives and the pursuit of artistic depth.



BERKAY ATEŞ - YILMAZ

Berkay Ateş is a Turkish actor and playwright, graduated from the Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Theatre Department. Known for his versatile performances, he earned the Promising Young Actor Award at the Adana Film Festival for *Abluka*. His notable film credits include *9,75*, *Black Night*, and *Passed by Censor*. A founder of his own theatre company, Ateş continues to balance his work as a writer and performer, maintaining a strong presence in both independent cinema and contemporary stage while exploring new storytelling forms.



FEYYAZ DUMAN - FERİT

Feyyaz Duman trained in folk dance at the ITU State Conservatory before completing a master's in theatre at Brooklyn College, New York. Upon returning to Türkiye, he built a distinguished career spanning cinema and digital platforms. His film work includes award-winning titles such as *Song of My Mother* and *Zagros*. A recipient of Best Actor honors at the Sarajevo, Antalya, and Mons Film Festivals, Duman is widely celebrated for his restrained intensity, technical precision, and his consistent focus on powerful, socially grounded performances.



NAZ GÖKTAN - FATMA

Naz Gökten is a theatre and cinema actress, dancer, and arts practitioner. After graduating from Bilkent University's Faculty of Music and Performing Arts, she appeared in various digital series and the film *Ölü Mevsim*. A recipient of the Young Talent Special Award at the Sadri Alışık Anatolian Awards for her solo stage performance, she is also the co-founder and an instructor at Sahne 367. Gökten continues to bridge the gap between classical training and modern performance, contributing significantly to the independent theatre scene in Türkiye.

ÖZLEM TAŞ - GÜLSÜM

Özlem Taş is an actress working across theatre and international cinema. A graduate of Ankara University's DTCF Theatre Department, she began her professional career in Türkiye before relocating to London in 2019. She has since worked across film and television in the UK and Türkiye, collaborating on various international productions while maintaining a deep connection to the stage. Her recent filmography includes *Two Trees*, *Rahma*, and *Battle of the Hedgehog*, showcasing her range across diverse cultural landscapes and her ability to navigate complex roles.

CAST

Mesut	Caner Cindoruk
Yılmaz	Berkay Ateş
Ferit	Feyyaz Duman
Fatma	Naz Göktan
Gülsüm	Özlem Taş
Seyit	Eren Demir
Muhammed	Selim Akgül
Pakize	Hichi Demi
Halil	Nazmi Karaman
Commander	Uğur Karabulut
Azad	Erdal Açıl
Yusuf	Selman Süer
Uncle ismail	Hüseyin Ocak
Furkan	Ahmet Öksüz
Yusuf	Aram Dildar
Mesut's son	Robin Aydın
Hacı	Şehabettin Dağ
Hacı's son	Çiya Şimşek
Halil's daughters	Tuğba Kartal
Mute boy	Baran Eyüpoğlu
Doctor	Emin Alper

CREW

Writer-Director	Emin Alper
Production Companies	Liman Film (TR), Bir Film (TR), Meltem Films (FR), TS Productions (FR), Circe Films (NL), Horsefly Films (GRE), ERT S.A. (GRE), Second Land (SE)
International Sales	Lucky Number
Producer	Nadir Öperli
Co-producers	Ersan Çongar, Laurent Lavolé, Miléna Poylo, Gilles Sacuto, Stienette Bosklopper, Maarten Swart, Yorgos Tsourgiannis, İrem Akbal
Director of Photography	Ahmet Sesigürgil, Barış Aygen
Music	Christiaan Verbeek
Editing	Özcan Vardar
Line Producer	Selim Güntürkün
Production Design	Nadide Argun Van Uden
Art Director	Bilen Bilmen
1st Assistant Director	Serap Aydoğan
Cast	Ezgi Baltaş
Costume Designer	Gülşah Yüksel
Hair, Make-up and SFX Designer	Kyriaki Melidou
Sound	Dimitris Kanellopoulos
Sound Design & Re-Recording Mixer	Nardi Van Dijk
Color Grading	Sakis Bouzanis
VFX Supervisor	Arnaud Leviez



76. Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Berlinale Competition

SALVATION



A FILM BY EMİN ALPER

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

DURATION
120 MINUTES

SCREENING FORMAT
DCP, 2K

IMAGE
COLOR

FORMAT
SCOPE

LANGUAGE
TURKISH, KURDISH



MELTEM Films



(horsefly)



eurimages



EKKOMEA
Hellenic Film &
Audiovisual Center



Lucky Number