

**7th December 2017 - As Edmund Burke, British philosopher and statesman, once said, “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” When ISIS seized control of the Syrian city of Raqqa in 2013, one would have forgiven the inhabitants for submitting to their tyrannical rule. However, in the face of such monstrous cruelty, a group of citizens took it upon themselves to report on and expose the atrocities committed by Islamic State against innocent people. This movement became known, as Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS).**



To highlight the [Global Migration Film Festival](#) and the [Together campaign](#), Ciné-ONU, in partnership with [OM](#) and [UNESCO](#), screened ‘City of Ghosts’, the latest film from award winning director Matthew Heineman. The documentary follows citizen journalists as they face the hardships of living undercover, on the run, and in exile, risking their lives daily in defiance of one of the most terrifying evils of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The screening was followed by a panel discussion chaired by Deborah Seward (UNRIC), with three guest speakers: Abdell Baset (a former detainee of an extremist group, now a chef and volunteer in Belgium); Saorla McCabe (UNESCO), and Eugenio Ambrosi (IOM).



In response to the question of European responsibility towards refugees, Eugenio Ambrosi was forthright in saying that, “our job is to make sure that Europe doesn’t turn into a land of ghosts itself, we need to make people feel welcome and not abandon them.”

Another poignant feature of the film was the way ISIS sought to clamp down on free speech by ruthlessly hunting down RBSS journalists. However, this suffering is often lost when figures on crimes against journalists are presented. UNESCO’s Saorla McCabe spoke about how the film highlighted perfectly that, “behind every murder statistic is a life.” The audience was made painfully aware of this during the screening when a member of RBSS shook uncontrollably after looking at photos of his dead colleagues.



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