



Press Info no. 4 | 18 September 2015

AFRICAN DIASPORA CINEMA Film Series Opens & Solidarity with the Democratic Movement in Burkina Faso

Shortly before the **AFRICAN DIASPORA CINEMA** film series opened (on 17/9), FilmInitiativ learned of the coup by the presidential guard in Burkina Faso (on 16/9) and decided to take the opportunity presented by the well-attended event in the Filmforum im Museum Ludwig to make a spontaneous action of solidarity. As announced, on Thursday evening in the Museum Ludwig short films were shown from the African diaspora worldwide, there was live music by singer **Mariama** and musician **Abdoulaye Kouyaté** from Paris, and guests from Germany and abroad were introduced. These included French-Senegalese director **Dyana Gaye**, Ethiopian-Israeli filmmaker **Bazi Gete**, Jamaican anti-homophobia activist **Dane Lewis**, and black German filmmakers **Nancy Mac Granaky Quaye** and **Esther Donkor**.

In addition, the programme was accompanied by information about the dramatic situation currently unfolding in the wake of the coup by presidential guard members in Burkina Faso. Presenting details about the situation were **Gerhardt Haag**, Director of Cologne's africologne theatre festival, and **Karl Rössel**, co-founder of the Cologne African Film Festival. The organisers of both Cologne African festivals maintain close connections with the theatre and film festivals in Ouagadougou, the Burkinabé capital. In June they held a dialogue forum in the context of the africologneFESTIVAL in the Filmforum im Museum Ludwig, focussing on the democratic movements in West Africa. The forum featured prominent guests from Burkina Faso, who are now under acute threat as a result of the coup.

On **17 October**, another event on **Burkina Faso After the Election** will be held in Cologne's Alte Feuerwache community centre, which has already been announced in the programme. Following a one-year transitional phase after the October 2014 fall of former president Blaise Compaoré's 27-year authoritarian regime, presidential and parliamentary elections were scheduled to take place on 11 October 2015 in Burkina Faso. The RSP presidential guard rebels are attempting to prevent these elections. Their leader, General Gilbert Deindéré, is one of Compaoré's closest henchmen and served as his chief of staff. Some of his rebels' first moves have been to track down and arrest members of the democratic movement. In just the first day after the coup, ten were dead and many were wounded. The homes and music studios of the activists and rappers Smockey and Samsk Lejah – both invited to Cologne – have been attacked. The 200 visitors at the opening of the **African Diaspora Cinema** series supported, with heavy applause, demands for the transitional government to be reinstated and for the elections to take place as scheduled. In a joint statement with the **Association of Burkinabés in NRW**, the **Munich Panafricanism Working Group** and the **Organisation Panafricanité et Diaspora Africaine en Europe**, the organisers of the Cologne African film and theatre festivals also called on the German government and the European Union “to refuse any cooperation with the rebels and to demand **the immediate restoration of democracy in Burkina Faso.**”