

Beaufort is a 2007 [Israeli War film](#). The film directed by Joseph Cedar was co-written by Cedar and Ron Leshem, based on Leshem's novel of the same name. The film takes place in the year 2000, the year of the IDF withdrawal from the Israeli Security Zone in southern Lebanon. It chronicles the daily routine of a group of soldiers positioned at the 12th century Crusader stronghold of Beaufort Castle, their feelings and their fears, and explores their moral dilemmas in the days preceding the withdrawal and end of the 18-year South Lebanon conflict.

Beaufort is one of the most successful Israeli films of the 2000s. It made more than US\$500,000 in the first 3 weeks of its release in the Israeli market, a substantial amount for a domestic Israeli film. Joseph Cedar won the Silver Bear award in the Berlin International Film Festival for directing *Beaufort*, and the film was also nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film,^[17] the first such nomination for an Israeli film since *Beyond the Walls* (1984) and the seventh overall.

Is *Beaufort* a war film or is it an anti-war film? Or is it a political film? Or is it neither? May be it is just a human film about a group of individuals thrown into a tense and stressful situation not of their doing and who are struggling to survive physically and cope with their feelings emotionally?

Beaufort is a film that will make you think about these questions. Enjoy and let's talk about it after the screening.

"It's a story that tells us that individual life has no value, that the nation is everything," Mr. Cedar said. But the Massada myth downplays the other Jews there who were willing to compromise, to give up the mountain and even leave Jerusalem, and hence, lived to tell the tale. It is they, Mr. Cedar said, who preserved Jewish life, values, and culture.

"Zionism's Massada motto," he said, "was drummed into us: 'Better to die as a lion than to live as a dog.' But the lions of Massada died while the dogs retreated and lived to have puppies. And we're still around, wagging our tails."

Hence, the film portrays the retreat from Beaufort not as a defeat, but as an act of strength, of true heroism. To have stayed, the filmmakers argue, would have demanded the pointless sacrifice of Jewish life. Such a theme was bound to be controversial in Israel, and it was. But Israelis, whose films increasingly explore political and moral complexity as opposed to those of the industry's early years, when unabashed nationalism and invariably heroic patriots dominated Israeli screens, were ready to hear such a harsh verdict. The IDF, in fact, supported the film and the Israeli government helped pay for it.