

A Woman Among Warlords: project of a documentary film on Afghanistan

Written by Indiegogo

Sunday, 12 August 2012 12:25

"A Woman Among Warlords" is a sponsored project of "From the Heart Productions".

Rodrigo Guim, [Indiegogo](#), August 12, 2012

{vimeo}48343527|450|260{/vimeo}

The Film

This is the project of a documentary film on Afghanistan. It seeks to promote unity of Afghans and the world at large for social change towards democracy, social justice and human rights. For this intent, the film will center on Afghan human rights activist Malalai Joya.

This film is based on the book *A Woman Among Warlords*, written by Malalai Joya. It presents the story of Malalai from her childhood until today. Her story is both extraordinary and ordinary. Extraordinary because she embodies resistance to oppression since she was young. Ordinary because her story is emblematic of the story of Afghan women of resistance. The focus is on how her life is shaped by her struggles against misogyny, fundamentalism, political oppression and war. Malalai was a war refugee, then she was an underground woman teacher for girls in the Taliban period, later she started a woman's clinic and orphanage and later still got elected to the Afghan parliament. She was suspended by the fundamentalists in power when she spoke in parliament. Hers is a life of struggle amid oppression. Today Malalai is an internationally-acclaimed activist for social justice and human rights struggling for peace and for real democracy in Afghanistan.

"Malalai Joya is a remarkable young woman, an activist schooled as a refugee in Pakistan in the 1990s, in part at schools run by RAWA, the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan. She was a teacher in underground schools in Afghanistan during the Taliban era and in Farah province, her home, she set up free clinics and an orphanage. In 2003, at 25, she made worldwide news by standing up at a national council and denouncing not only the Taliban but the myriad warlords who'd emerged to take control of the country with American backing. In 2005, she was elected to Afghanistan's parliament, dominated then as now by ultra-conservatives, warlords, and corrupt politicians, but two years later she was suspended from parliament for her fierce criticism of Afghanistan's parliament and government. Since then, she's lived semi-underground, surviving a series of assassination attempts. In 2009 she was named by the BBC as 'the bravest woman of Afghanistan' and in 2010 Time considered her as one of the '100 Most Influential People of the World.' "

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Following on the tracks of her life, the film seeks to provoke reflection upon the history and future of Afghanistan, as seen through the eyes and witnesses of Malalai Joya. Malalai shares ideas of Afghan people that are not present in the country's government and at global institutions of power. The project will include interviews with other Afghan organizations as well as international scholars and activists speaking to the history and future of Afghanistan. The main storyline is narrated by Malalai herself, and her affirmations are punctuated by images of the places where she lived, worked, and by interviews with people she knows or who know her.

"Joya says that she wants the U.S. and NATO troops to leave, immediately. She is bitterly opposed to the Taliban, but she's equally strongly opposed to the gangsters who run the old Northern Alliance and its allies, who were backed by the United States in 2001, and to President Karzai.

Despite the almost impossible difficulties she faces, Joya says: "We have two choices. To sit in silence, or to do struggle. But I'm alive. I didn't expect to be alive. Still, she can't travel inside Afghanistan, can't visit the provinces. In Kabul, for her safety, she's constantly changing houses and is followed by 12 armed guards." Citation: Robert Dreyfuss, "A Day With Malalai Joya".



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The Impact

The film is a production of Instituto Prónesis de Audiovisual e Mudança Social (Pronesis Institute of Audiovisual and Social Change), a Brazilian non-profit association which produces films that are politically engaged and seek to promote social change both by raising awareness as well as by raising funds for the causes it portrays in its films. All profits and prizes of this film will go to organizations selected directly by Malalai Joya.

The film will provide Afghans with a call for unity around democracy, human rights and social justice, which are the calls of Malalai Joya. It will be made with a view to produce unity in Afghanistan and the world around these issues. Many Afghans are currently struggling for justice, democracy and human rights, and Malalai Joya is one of these important voices that need to circulate. That is why the film will be shot in Dari and why it will be then easier to circulate within the country. It will be downloadable online so it is more easily accessible to Afghans and the world.

To put it simply, we will produce a film with a view to directly impact Afghanistan itself, to provoke unity for democracy and human rights. But the film will also impact the world at large, mainly the American public which needs to realize its responsibility toward Afghanistan's past, present and future.



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The Filmmaker

Rodrigo Guim is a Brazilian Ecologist, Anthropologist, and documentary filmmaker. He produced his first documentary film at age 22 with no training for film whatsoever, using a Handycam and the first version of Final Cut Pro. This film, shot 11 years ago, is now available on youtube (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4r9GVEExGeZw>). He spent the last 10 years studying camera, editing, filmmaking at schools in Brazil and in San Francisco, CA, USA. Now his approach to film is activist, using film to promote social change where it is most needed.

Rodrigo first met Malalai Joya when she was on a speaking tour of the United States in 2009. He discussed with her his interest in directing a documentary on the current state of affairs in Afghanistan. He was in San Francisco, studying for a PhD in Social and Cultural Anthropology, in a program that is focused on postcolonial, poststructural, participatory and feminist research. He has been studying the history of Afghanistan since 2001, when he was a student for the first time in San Francisco for a Master's degree in anthropology. He was then looking for topics of research that could be participatory and socially engaged, and relevant to some specific community and to the world at large.



What We Need and What You Get

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The film is budgeted in US\$2,000.00 (eighty-two thousand dollars) and this amount will fund travel expenses to/from and within Afghanistan for the director (going there from Brazil); an Afghan crew of 3 people (one assistant/translator, one cameraperson/assistant, one driver) for two or more months; travel expenses to and within the United States for the director to interview diverse American anti-war organizations; an animator, an editor and a colorist for post-production; 2 microphones; 4 external Hard Drives; plus all other post-production and marketing costs.

From The Heart Productions, Inc. is the fiscal sponsor of the campaign. Donors in the United States can use the IRS number 95 444 5418 on their taxes. Donations to this campaign qualify as "charitable contributions" under the U.S. Tax Code.

If we don't reach our goal, we will work on the film with a smaller crew but will finish it anyway. If we SURPASS our goal, this amount that is unused will go to Afghan social organizations chosen by Malalai, as will all monies received from any prizes and profits of the film.

We expect to have the film finished by the beginning or mid- 2013.

Your perks! See column above for perks!