

CONTACT

Voleine Amilcar, ITVS

415-356-8383 x 244

voleine_amilcar@itvs.org**PBS FILM "PUSHING THE ELEPHANT" TO BE HIGHLIGHTED AT CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN****Featuring Remarks From Rose Mapendo, Survivor and Advocate From the Democratic Republic Of Congo; Actor and Amnesty International Spokesperson Samantha Mathis; and Paula Kerger, PBS President and CEO**

Washington, DC—(September 16, 2010)— *Pushing The Elephant*, a film supported by The Independent Television Service (ITVS), which brings independently produced, high-quality public broadcasting and new media programs to public television, is the centerpiece of a congressional briefing on Capitol Hill. In cooperation with Congressman Bill Delahunt (D-Mass.), Janice Schakowsky (D-Illinois), and Ted Poe (R-Texas), the briefing will address global violence against women and girls through the International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA) (H.R. 4594/S.2982). A coalition of NGOs including Jewish Women International, Amnesty International, Care International, Family Violence Prevention Fund, Women Thrive Worldwide, Global AIDS Alliance, International Center for Research on Women, International Rescue Committee, and Refugees International have come together to host this event and raise awareness around this issue. The briefing will be held on Thursday, September 16 at 8:30 AM at the Rayburn House Office Building (Room B-340).

The briefing will feature a 10-minute screening of *Pushing the Elephant*, a film by Beth Davenport and Elizabeth Mandel. A co-production of ITVS and Arts Engine, Inc., the film will later premiere on the PBS series *Independent Lens* in March 2011. The screening will be followed by remarks from the film's subject, Congolese refugee Rose Mapendo who will share her extraordinary story of suffering, survival, and escape from the genocidal war in the Democratic Republic of Congo in February 2000. Paula Kerger, president of PBS will also speak on the importance of the public media's role in bringing new and underserved voices to the American people, raising awareness around global issues, and sparking informed dialogue.

"ITVS's mission is to create civic discourse through our programs and partnerships. *Pushing the Elephant* captures one woman's remarkable story and reminds us of the resiliency of people everywhere who endure violence. We are honored that this film has already and will continue to foster dialogue around this global human-rights issue," says Sally Jo Fifer, president and CEO of ITVS.

Additional speakers include Ambassador (Ret.) George Ward, senior vice president for International Programs for World Vision; Ritu Sharma, president and co-founder of Women Thrive Worldwide; and actor and Amnesty International Spokesperson Samantha Mathis.

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“Approximately one in three women worldwide is a victim of violence. This is an opportunity for the United States to place ending violence against women and girls among its highest priorities by setting an example and by serving as a catalyst for a long-term global commitment to ending violence against women. The I-VAWA invests in a safer future for women and I urge Congress to pass this bill now,” says Lori Weinstein, executive director of Jewish Women International.

I-VAWA calls for a comprehensive piece of legislation that will integrate violence prevention in U.S. foreign policy and support innovative programs that have been shown to effectively reduce violence against women and girls. The legislation proposed by I-VAWA was developed by Amnesty International USA, Family Violence Prevention Fund, and Women Thrive Worldwide, with input from 40 international and 150 U.S.-based groups with relevant expertise. The bill was introduced in the House and Senate during the 110th Congress and received bipartisan support. Hearings were held in October 2009 by Senator John Kerry (D-Mass.) in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and by Representative Bill Delahunt (D-Mass.) in the House Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight. In February 2010, a bipartisan team including Senators Kerry, Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), Susan Collins (R-Maine), and Olympia Snowe (R-Maine), and Representatives Delahunt, Ted Poe (R-Texas), and Janice Schakowsky (D-Illinois) re-introduced I-VAWA in the 111th Congress.

ABOUT ITVS

Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web, and the Emmy® Award-winning weekly series *Independent Lens* on Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. Since ITVS's inception in 1991, its programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing television audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people. For more information about ITVS, visit www.itvs.org.

ABOUT JEWISH WOMEN INTERNATIONAL

Jewish Women International is the leading Jewish organization empowering women and girls through economic literacy, community training, healthy relationships education, and the proliferation of women's leadership. Their innovative programs, advocacy, and philanthropic initiatives protect the fundamental rights of all girls and women to live in safe homes, thrive in healthy relationships, and realize the full potential of their personal strength. JWI is committed to supporting federal policy that protects all women from violence and is a leading advocate for the passage of the International Violence Against Women Act (IVAWA). For more information visit www.jwi.org.

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