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Open Society Institute Awards \$5 Million to Support Sundance Institute and Documentary Films

NEW YORK – The Sundance Institute will receive a \$5 million grant for its Documentary Film Program to help raise awareness on human rights, the Open Society Institute announced today.

"Films can play a powerful role in inspiring action on human rights, justice, accountability, and other open society issues," said Aryeh Neier, president of the Open Society Institute. "The Sundance Institute's work helps filmmakers shed light on the most pressing challenges of our time."

The award renews the Open Society Institute's support for the Sundance Documentary Film Program, which began at OSI in 1996 and was made part of the Sundance Institute in 2002 with an initial \$4.6 million dollar gift. The Open Society Institute, founded by George Soros, works in over 60 countries to promote vibrant and tolerant democracies.

"Sundance Institute has supported documentary storytellers since its beginning," said Robert Redford, founder and president of Sundance Institute. "The recognition of that history by George Soros and the Open Society Institute, and the continuation of our relationship over time, speaks to our shared belief that culture—in this case documentary film—is having a profound impact in shaping progressive change."

As a dollar-for-dollar matching grant, Sundance Institute aims to raise \$10 million over the next five years to support documentaries on significant, contemporary issues.

"This critical funding at a very fragile time is a significant commitment to supporting the belief that documentary storytelling has a meaningful role in the international work toward justice and equity across a range of issues," said Cara Mertes, Director of the Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program.

The Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program offers funding as well as creative, production, and distribution support to documentary filmmakers through a range of opportunities and services. These include the Sundance Institute Documentary Fund, the Documentary Edit and Story Laboratory, Documentary Composers Laboratory, Creative Documentary Producers Lab, as well as the Sundance Film Festival, Creative Producers Summit, work-in-progress screenings, and partnerships such as the Skoll *Stories of Change* partnership, the Channel Four Foundation *Good Pitch* partnership, and a variety of international initiatives and collaborations.

Since its inception in 1996, the Sundance Institute Documentary Fund has awarded grants to more than 450 films in 54 countries, from the former Soviet Union, the Middle East, China, India, Africa, North America and elsewhere. Films that have received financial and creative support include: *My Country, My Country*, *The Devil Came on Horseback*, *Iraq in Fragments*; and *Trouble the Water*.

Sundance Institute

Founded by Robert Redford in 1981, Sundance Institute is a not-for-profit organization that fosters the development of original storytelling in film and theatre, and presents the annual Sundance Film Festival. Internationally recognized for its artistic development programs for directors, screenwriters, producers, film composers, playwrights and theatre artists, Sundance Institute has nurtured such projects as *Angels in America*, *Spring Awakening*, *Boys Don't Cry* and *Born into Brothels*.

Open Society Institute

The Open Society Institute, a private operating and grantmaking foundation, works to build vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens. To achieve its mission, OSI seeks to shape public policies that assure greater fairness in political, legal, and economic systems and safeguard fundamental rights. OSI works in over 60 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East, as well as the United States.

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