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**press information**

IN AN AFGHANISTAN EMERGING FROM DECADES OF DARKNESS *WIDE ANGLE* FOLLOWS A COURAGEOUS WOMAN WHO RISKED HER LIFE TO WIN A SEAT IN THE COUNTRY'S FIRST FREE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION.

*A Woman Among Warlords* Premieres Tuesday, September 11 At 9 P.M. As *WIDE ANGLE* Concludes Its Sixth Season On PBS

**Daljit Dhaliwal** Interviews Renowned Activist **Zainab Salbi** About Women In War-Torn Regions Rebuilding Their Lives

*WIDE ANGLE* presents a profile of Malalai Joya, the outspoken Afghani women's rights activist who was suspended from her seat in Afghanistan's democratic parliament in May 2007 for sharply criticizing her fellow legislators. In a documentary that captures one woman's courage and determination under harrowing circumstances, *WIDE ANGLE* follows Malalai Joya's historic and perilous 2005 campaign in Afghanistan's first democratic parliamentary election in more than 30 years.

*A Woman Among Warlords* premieres Tuesday, September 11 at 9 p.m. (ET) on PBS (check local listings) as *WIDE ANGLE* concludes its sixth season. *A Woman Among Warlords* is adapted from the documentary film *Enemies of Happiness*, by Eva Mulvad, winner of the Sundance World Cinema Jury Prize 2007, and the IDFA Silver Wolf Prize 2006.

The story begins in 2003, two years after the fundamentalist Taliban regime was overthrown by a U.S.-led coalition. The 25-year-old Joya becomes one of Afghanistan's most famous women virtually overnight by delivering a speech in the Loya Jirga, or constitutional meeting, condemning the presence of warlords – a sacrosanct political force in the country.

Although her remarks earn her many enemies, Joya is undeterred in her determination to win a



place in Afghanistan's new government. . "Although I've been threatened thousands of times," says Joya, "I'll forever fight for freedom."

*A Woman Among Warlords* follows the tense final days of Joya's 2005 parliamentary campaign, surrounded by armed guards in the remote and impoverished desert province of Farah, where Joya had dedicated herself to providing health and education to women under the Taliban – when all female education was banned. Despite death threats and assassination attempts, Joya meets with clan leaders, opium kings and an elderly woman named Shirin – a former Mujahedeen fighter who says she fought the Soviet occupiers in the 1980s – in an effort to win the hearts of the voters who will decide the outcome of the historic election. As voting day nears, the Taliban resurfaces, threatening and attacking candidates in an effort to disrupt the elections. In order to remain safe, Joya must move undetected from safe house to safe house, hiding under a garment she despises. "Although I hate the burka, I have to wear it," she explains. "A lot of women have taken off their burka at my suggestion, but now I'm forced to wear it myself."

Along the campaign trail, the candidate encourages village women to exercise their long-denied rights to vote, and helps advise the people of her district on family matters. She takes on the poignant case of Rahela Nakim, a 13-year-old girl who is trying to resist the pressure of a forced marriage, a fate that awaits more than 70 percent of Afghan women. "He has weapons and walks with a limp," says the fifth-grader. "I can't find happiness with him." Adds her despondent father, "I'd rather lose my head than give him my child. He already has two wives and children and he's 80 years old."

On the September 18, 2005 election day, some 12-and-a-half million Afghans, half the country's population, are registered to vote in the parliamentary elections, which come one year after Hamid Karzai was elected in the country's first free presidential election. Forty-four percent of newly registered voters are women.

When the votes are counted, former warlords and their supporters have won the majority

of the seats. But 28 percent of the 249 seats have gone to female candidates – and among them is Malalai Joya. Elected with the second-largest number of votes in her province, Joya is the youngest member of parliament. Although it's a landmark victory, Joya's career and life will continue to be threatened. Ultimately, her challenges to the warlords' continuing power will cause her expulsion from the parliament.

Through this story of one woman's courage, persistence and optimism, **WIDE ANGLE** provides a unique insight into the politics and culture of a nation ruined by war, still ruled by fear, but desperate for a change for the better.

After the film, anchor Daljit Dhaliwal speaks with **Zainab Salbi**, founder and president of Women for Women International, a non-profit that provides women survivors of war, civil strife and other conflicts with resources to move from crisis and poverty into being self-sufficient and active citizens who promote and protect peace and stability.

For additional information and photography, visit **[thirteen.org/pressroom/wideangle](http://thirteen.org/pressroom/wideangle)** or **[pbs.org/pressroom](http://pbs.org/pressroom)**.

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**WIDE ANGLE** is a production of Thirteen/WNET New York for PBS. Stephen Segaller is executive producer. Pamela Hogan is series producer. Andy Halper is senior producer.

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Thirteen/WNET New York is one of the key program providers for public television, bringing such acclaimed series as *Nature*, *Great Performances*, *American Masters*, *Charlie Rose*, *Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly*, *Wide Angle*, *Secrets of the Dead*, *NOW With David Brancaccio*, and *Cyberchase* - as well as the work of Bill Moyers - to audiences nationwide. As the flagship public

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