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Groundbreaking Short-Film Festival Launches Films On-line

***Women's Voices from the Muslim World: A Short-Film Festival* invites audiences to watch and rate films by citizen journalists and filmmakers**

New York, NY October 4, 2010—Nine months ago, an idea was conceived: To create an on-line platform from which citizen journalists and filmmakers could speak directly to an international audience about women's rights in the Muslim world. The ensuing collection of films would contribute to filling the void in information left by traditional media, news and art sources. "We came together and conceived this idea and nine months later, well, here it is," laughs WVN Founder Catinca Tabacaru.

In June 2010, WVN began accepting short-film submissions to *Women's Voices from the Muslim World: A Short-Film Festival* focused on women of all faiths living in Muslim-majority countries and Muslim women living as minorities around the globe. The Festival is open to all filmmakers, regardless of experience, age, gender, nationality or faith. Since opening submissions, the Festival has received over 40 films from 27 countries around the world. "We are so pleased with the range of films that have been submitted," says WVN Director of Festival Operations Cassandra Schaffa, "Not only do we have a representation of women's voices from four continents, but the scope of topics explored in the films are wonderfully varied. We've got everything from women breaking barriers on the work front, to violence against women, to performance art, to the power of friendship, to the debate on the burka, to immigration. We're truly capturing stories that unfortunately never make it into mainstream media."

Today the films are available on-line at www.WomensVoicesNow.org/watch. "The on-line component of the Festival allows for anyone, anywhere, at any time to watch and learn from these stories," says WVN Director of Communications Miriam Wakim. Audience participation is highly encouraged on the WVN site. The films are open for ratings and comments and Audience Choice prizes will be awarded to the top three rated films at a Festival event being held at the Los Angeles Film School March 10-12, 2011. In addition, prizes totaling US\$35,000 will be awarded to the top films in Documentary, Fiction, Student and Experimental categories.

Submissions will remain open until November 24 while the on-line ratings competition will continue through the end of the year.

For more information about WVN and the Festival and to submit and watch films at www.WomensVoicesNow.org.

About: Women's Voices Now's mission is to empower women and give voice to the struggle for civil, economic, and political rights. WVN creates platforms from which women of all faiths and backgrounds may speak directly to each other and to an international audience. *Women's Voices from the Muslim World: A Short-Film Festival* is WVN's response to a clear developing interest in the area of women's rights in Muslim-majority countries and a need to open and elevate an already complex and nuanced dialogue that reveals countless conflicts between religion and politics, tradition and modernity, and written versus practiced civil norms. The medium of film, specifically short-film available on the Internet, allows for the broadest possible reach into even the most remote areas of the world.

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