



24th UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION FILM FESTIVAL
October 21-31, 2021 • Palo Alto • East Palo Alto • San Francisco • Stanford University
unaff.org

PRESS RELEASE

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OPENING NIGHT

**24th ANNUAL UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION FILM FESTIVAL (UNAFF)
PRESENTS OPENING NIGHT ON OCTOBER 21 WITH THE THEME “MOVING FORWARD”
SPECIAL GUESTS EXPECTED: PALO ALTO MAYOR TOM DUBOIS,
FILMMAKERS ABBY GINZBERG, JULIAN SHER, & SKYE FITZGERALD**

**UNAFF PRESENTS IN-PERSON SCREENINGS AND PANELS OCTOBER 21-31 OF
60 GROUNDBREAKING DOCUMENTARIES FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE
WHICH WILL CHANGE YOUR MIND ABOUT THE WORLD**

The United Nations Association Film Festival (UNAFF) presents their return to in-person events, with Opening Night on Thursday, October 21 at the Mitchell Park Community Center in Palo Alto, kicking off with a welcome by Palo Alto Mayor Tom DuBois. The first film, HUNGER WARD, examines the fight in Yemen to thwart the spread of starvation against the backdrop of a forgotten war, with the multiple Oscar-nominated director Skye Fitzgerald coming from the UK for the screening. Also visiting is Canadian director Julian Sher for his very timely film on the “forever war” against the Taliban, GHOSTS OF AFGHANISTAN. Rounding out Opening Night is the inspiring BARBARA LEE: SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER, with filmmaker Abby Ginzberg in person.

THURSDAY October 21

Mitchell Park Community Center, 3700 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto,

5:30 PM Opening Night Reception – sponsored by Adelante Coffee and Judy’s Breadsticks, music by POTENTIAL Jazz Ensemble

6:00 PM Opening words by Palo Alto Mayor, Tom DuBois

6:30 PM HUNGER WARD (Yemen, 40 min)

7:20 PM GHOSTS OF AFGHANISTAN (Afghanistan/US, 59 min)

8:30 PM BARBARA LEE: SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER (US, 82 min)

Ticket: \$12 per film session (excludes receptions) at <https://tickets.stanford.edu>

For more information: www.unaff.org

Press photos are available at <http://www.unaff.org/2021/press.html>

HUNGER WARD

Director: Skye Fitzgerald

Filmed from inside two of the most active therapeutic feeding centers in Yemen, the Academy Nominated HUNGER WARD documents two female health care workers fighting to thwart the spread of starvation against the backdrop of a forgotten war. The film provides an unflinching portrait of Dr. Aida Alsadeeq and Nurse Mekkia Mahdi as they try to save the lives of hunger-stricken children within a population on the brink of famine.

GHOSTS OF AFGHANISTAN

Director: Julian Sher

The 'Ghosts of Afghanistan' reveals the true face of the “forever war.” The West invaded Afghanistan in 2001 to topple the Taliban regime with promises of democracy, freedom and women’s rights. It was a disaster. Hundreds of thousands of people were killed. Corruption and abuses are endemic. Now the foreign troops have withdrawn. And Taliban, far from defeated, are once again back in power. What went wrong with the good war? As a young and idealistic war correspondent, Graeme Smith followed the troops into battle in Afghanistan. As the Taliban were sweeping across the country, he returned to revisit old friends and acquaintance and sees the deep divisions in the country Smith makes a remarkable journey to visit with the Taliban at their unofficial headquarters outside of Afghanistan, in Doha, Qatar. The movement that once banned television and cameras now has a young generation of leaders who post videos on the Taliban’s official website and use social media to spread their message. Now they are the new rulers of the country and the world awaits.

BARBARA LEE: SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

Director/Producer: Abby Ginzberg

Representative Barbara Lee is a steadfast voice for human rights, peace and economic and racial justice in the US Congress who cut her teeth as a volunteer for the Black Panther Party and was the lone vote in opposition to the broad authorization of military force following the September 11th attacks. The film not only introduces the public to Barbara Lee but to many others such as Senator Cory Booker, Rep. John Lewis, Rep. Ayanna Pressley, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, CNN commentator Van Jones, actor Danny Glover and author Alice Walker who all share insights about what makes Barbara Lee unique as a public servant and as a truth-telling African American woman.

UNAFF 2021 will be held in total over eleven days, October 21-31, presenting in person 60 documentaries, in Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, Stanford University, and San Francisco. Details at www.unaff.org.

The award-winning United Nations Association Film Festival has grown to be one of the oldest and most respected documentary film festivals in the United States. UNAFF was originally conceived to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was founded by Stanford educator and film critic Jasmina Bojic. In addition to providing early outlets for films, many of which have gone on to win major awards and accolades, UNAFF takes pride in creating a community forum for discovery and dialogue about different cultures, social issues and solutions. Over the years UNAFF has screened some of the most awarded and talked about documentaries in the industry, including eight that went on to win Academy Awards and thirty two that were nominated. In 2014 the ICFT (International Council for Film, Television and Audiovisual Communication of UNESCO) presented the UNESCO Fellini Medal to Jasmina Bojic, Founder and Executive Director of UNAFF, in recognition of her exceptional contribution in promoting the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights through the art of documentary film.

UNAFF’s mission has expanded to broad, year-round programs that augment its reach. In addition to the annual film festival, UNAFF organizes panel discussions, initiates programs that engage children, students, seniors, veterans, hosts a traveling festival which keeps the films alive well beyond their initial festival showings and opens its doors to documentary film students and researchers.