

2012 ACADEMY AWARD® WINNER FOR DOCUMENTARY (SHORT SUBJECT)

SAVING FACE

VIEWER'S GUIDE

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OVERVIEW

Everyday somewhere in the world someone – most likely a woman – is victimized by a brutal acid attack while numerous other cases go unreported. With little or no access to reconstructive surgery, survivors are physically and emotionally scarred. Many reported assailants, often a husband or someone else known to the victim, receive minimal if any punishment.

SAVING FACE chronicles the lives of two acid-attack survivors in Pakistan, Zakia and Rukhsana, as they attempt to bring their assailants to justice and move on with their lives. The women are supported by NGOs, skilled doctors, and empathetic policymakers such as the Acid Survivors Foundation-Pakistan, plastic surgeon Dr. Mohammad Jawad who returns to his home country to assist them, attorney Ms. Sarkar Abbass who fights Zakia’s case, and female politician Marvi Memon who advocates for new legislation.



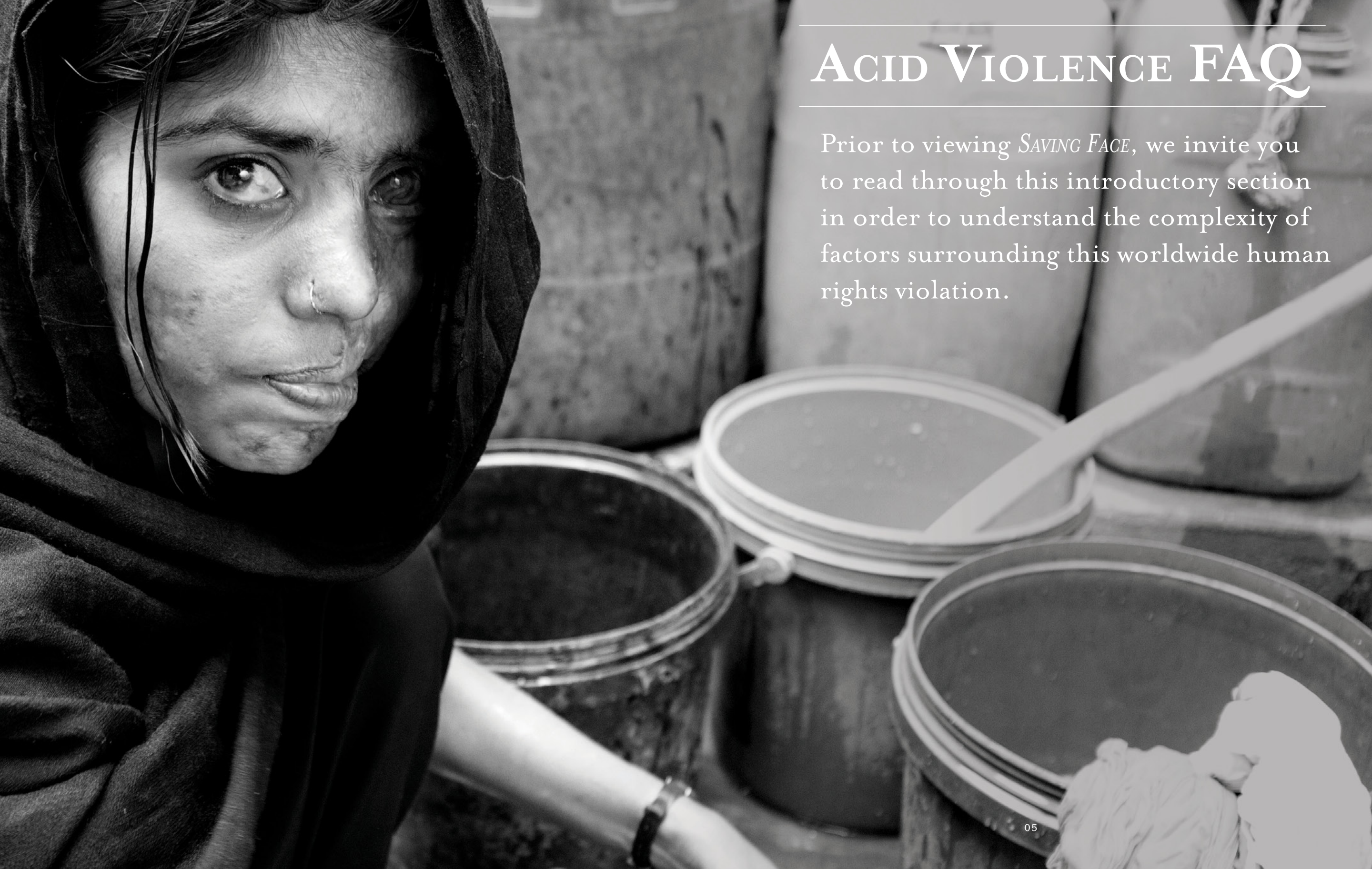
INTRODUCTION TO VIEWER’S GUIDE



The Viewer’s Guide for *SAVING FACE* is one of many tools available to inform ourselves, our communities and our nations’ leaders on the devastating impact of one acid attack.

The guide is not intended to be a comprehensive resource on acid violence, but rather to introduce audiences to the complexity of issues surrounding this crime and ways to take action moving forward. As Co-Director Daniel Junge expressed, “the film must be more than an expose of horrendous crimes -- it must be a recipe for addressing the problem and a hope for the future.”

SAVING FACE has launched a multi-faceted outreach effort called Project SAAVE (Stand Against Acid Violence) to raise greater awareness of the horrific global problem of acid violence, to spotlight the efforts of NGOs and other change agents working to eliminate it, and to highlight ways that individuals can get involved worldwide. Learn more about the outreach campaign at www.projectsaaave.org.



ACID VIOLENCE FAQ

Prior to viewing *SAVING FACE*, we invite you to read through this introductory section in order to understand the complexity of factors surrounding this worldwide human rights violation.

PRE-VIEW: ACID VIOLENCE FAQ

WHAT IS ACID VIOLENCE?

Acid violence is the deliberate use of acid to attack another human being. It is estimated that roughly 80 percent of victims are women and almost 40 percent are under the age of 18. Attackers often target the head and face in order to maim, disfigure and blind. The act rarely kills but causes severe physical, psychological and social scarring. Victims are often left with no legal recourse, limited access to medical or psychological assistance and without the means to support themselves.

Acid violence is a worldwide phenomenon that is not restricted to a particular race, religion or geographical location. It occurs in many countries in South-East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, the West Indies and the Middle East. Recently attacks have emerged in other regions including the United Kingdom and the United States. Acid attacks are most common in Cambodia, Afghanistan, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. In many countries acid attacks constitute a “hidden” form of violence against women and children that often goes unreported even though the visible signs of the crime are difficult to overlook.

WHY DOES IT OCCUR?

Victims of acid violence are attacked for many reasons and the patterns of attack vary from country to country. They result from domestic or land disputes, dowry demands or a violent act of revenge toward a young girl or woman who spurned sexual advances or rejected a marriage proposal. While it is reprehensible when acid violence impacts men and boys, it is important to recognize that acid attacks are a form of gender-based violence because the violence disproportionately impacts women.

Acid attacks, like other forms of violence against women, are not random or natural phenomena. They are social phenomena deeply embedded in a gender order that has historically privileged patriarchal control over women and justified the use of violence to “keep women in their places.” In many countries, women are victims of acid attacks because they allegedly or actually transgress gender norms or roles that discriminate against women and keep them in subordinated positions.

Acid violence perpetuates gender inequality and discrimination. Survivors often face marginalization from society after the attack. Acid violence also creates a culture of fear among women in the community. Some may feel that they would be attacked if they failed to conform to traditional subordinate gender roles and that the perpetrator would not be punished.

HOW DOES IT OCCUR?

Weak rule of law, political corruption, cultural inequalities between genders and the availability of acids, such as Nitric or Sulphuric Acid used in manufacturing and processing cotton and rubber, all contribute to incidents of acid violence in many countries.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS AND CONSEQUENCES?

Nitric or Sulphuric Acid melts the skin tissue exposing the bones below the flesh, often even dissolving the bone. In cases where the acid reaches the eye of the victim it blinds them permanently. Many acid attack survivors lose the use of one or both of their eyes. Others lose the use of their hands. Other organs may also be corroded, and limbs may be lost. They may contract infections such as septicemia or gangrene. Survivors will continue to be irritated by the itchiness and tightness of their skin on a daily basis and may have trouble eating and drinking depending on the severity of the attack. Because the reconstructive surgery is so expensive, even victims and their families that decide to go ahead with the procedure may find it difficult to obtain the necessary funds.

PRE-VIEW: ACID VIOLENCE FAQ

An acid attack will greatly inhibit the victims' ability to work or even mother her children. If a woman cannot work, she will not be able to contribute to the finances of the household or perform daily household duties. In the case where the victim is unmarried, it will greatly reduce her future chances of marriage due to the appearance distorting effect of acid. Such victims will likely face extreme and unavoidable poverty.

The psychological scars may be less visible but they are just as real and traumatic. The severe isolation many survivors face as they are ostracized from their communities, lose the ability to earn a living and much of the independence they once enjoyed causes additional difficulty. Coming to terms with the trauma of the attack, the permanent scarring and disfigurement and the loss of social acceptance are some of the biggest challenges a survivor will need to overcome.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO STOP ACID VIOLENCE?

Because acid violence is primarily gender-based it reflects and perpetuates the inequality of women in society and is prohibited by international law. To eradicate acid violence, governments must address its root causes—inequality and discrimination against women. Governments must provide redress to victims, including compensation for healthcare costs, limit the availability of acid, punish perpetrators appropriately and support ongoing women's empowerment efforts to enhance their self-confidence and ability to sustain independent livelihoods.

A list of the film's leading NGO partners is included at the end of this guide. The website, www.projectsaaave.org will reference the ongoing network of supporting partners as well.



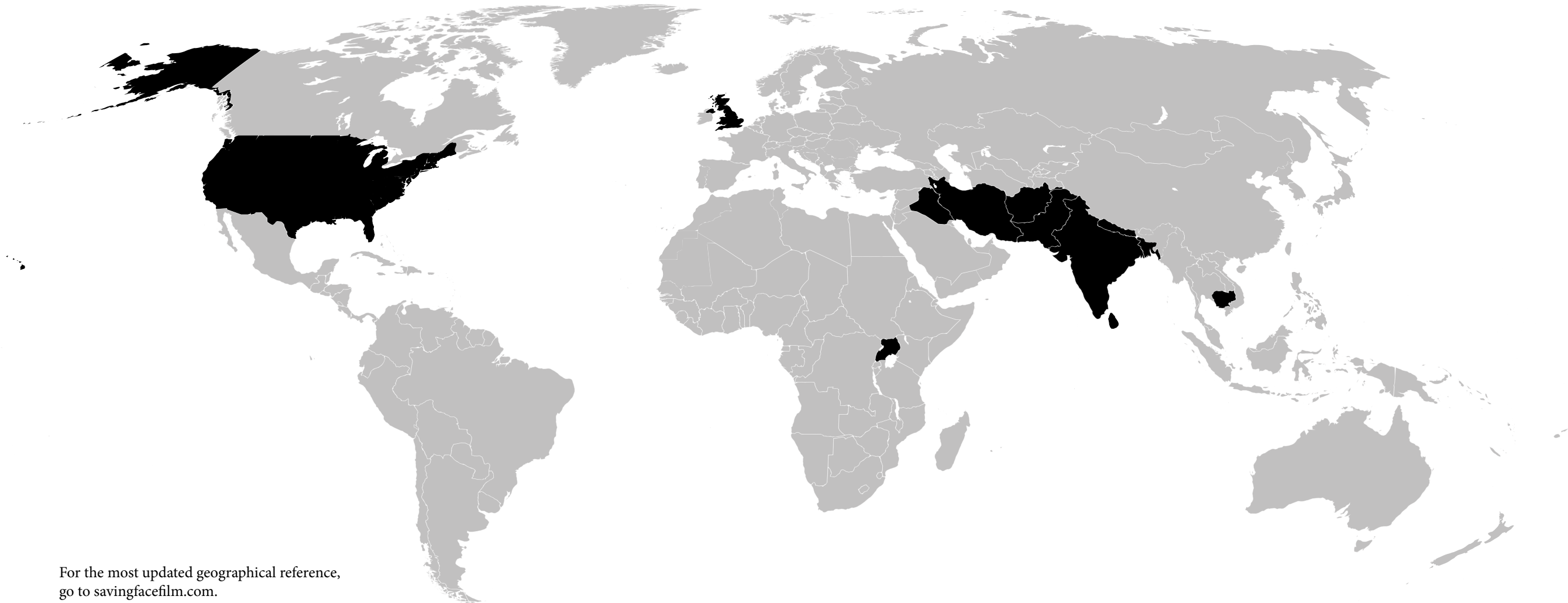
(Portions of the FAQ section were excerpted from *ACID SURVIVORS TRUST INTERNATIONAL* [HTTP://WWW.ACIDVIOLENCE.ORG/](http://www.acidviolence.org/) WEBSITE AND *COMBATING ACID VIOLENCE IN BANGLADESH, INDIA AND CAMBODIA, REPORT BY THE AVON GLOBAL CENTER FOR WOMEN AND JUSTICE AT CORNELL LAW SCHOOL, THE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE NEW YORK CITY BAR ASSOCIATION, THE CORNELL LAW SCHOOL INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CLINIC, AND THE VIRTUE FOUNDATION, 2011.*)

WHERE IT HAPPENS

Highlighted are countries where acid attacks have occurred over the past decade. Unfortunately, certifiable data continues to be difficult to obtain because victims are reluctant to come forward and many of these governments deny the extent of the problem. It is also critical to note that while acid violence has occurred in Australia, Belgium, the United Kingdom and the United States and the impact on survivors and their families is no less grave, the rate of attacks are far lower in these regions than in other areas of the globe. Acid attacks are highest in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India and Pakistan.

COUNTRIES HIGHLIGHTED (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

Afghanistan, Algeria, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Ethiopia, Greece, Guyana, India, Iraq, Iran, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Laos, Liberia, Malawi, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Uganda, the United States and United Kingdom



For the most updated geographical reference, go to savingfacefilm.com.

If you are viewing the film as a facilitator, you can encourage productive discussion of *SAVING FACE* by simply opening with the following general questions:

- What is the film about? What relationship does this have to the title *SAVING FACE*?
- What do you think you will remember about the film a week from now?
A month from now? A year from now?
- What questions remain about the individuals in the film or about acid violence in general?
- What questions would you like to pose to the filmmakers?

Facilitators Roles

To prepare for the discussion it is always helpful to take the steps to know as much as possible about your audience, the countries they came from and their experiences. As the discussion unfolds, the group's comments and concerns will determine the agenda of the ensuing dialogue and at this point the facilitator's primary role will be to keep the conversation flowing by ensuring that everyone is heard equally.

Another critical role is to protect group members who may be vulnerable, such as survivors or family members who have been impacted directly by acid violence. At the beginning of your event, help your group establish ground rules that ensure everyone's safety. These may include agreeing to confidentiality and reminding people to use respectful language. You may need to do some prior planning to provide a safe environment. This might include arranging for translators or other support services. If survivors in the community would like to participate in the planning of a screening or discussion, please support these efforts by helping them prepare for the event with skilled counselors, listening to their needs and supporting their personal advocacy efforts.

Finally, to combat the "compassion fatigue" that can sometimes come from seeing too many media stories about people in need, plan to end your event by directing the group towards action. If the suggestions listed at the end of this guide do not meet your group's needs, spend some time before the session ends brainstorming about next steps.

After viewing *SAVING FACE* a range of emotions may emerge which are important to discuss and explore. This section is organized to direct these emotions towards supporting survivor services and other international advocacy work. In conversation with our NGO partners, we have identified four foundational areas that are fundamental to address if acid violence is to be eradicated.

- **Supporting Survivor Services**
- **Combating Acid Violence as a Crime**
- **Addressing Corporate Responsibility**
- **Leading Prevention**

To assist viewers or facilitators in post-view discussions, we have provided a sample framework to de-brief the viewing experience. The three-part frame includes:

- **A "Framing Question" to spark public discussion or personal reflection**
- **"Further Investigations" to deepen a viewers' knowledge on the issue**
- **Suggested "Next Steps for Action" if advocacy work is of interest**

It is critical to keep in mind that Zakia and Rukhsana, the two stories we learn of in *SAVING FACE*, are only two of hundreds of women, men and children who are intimately impacted by acid attacks every year. Given that acid violence is not endemic to a country, culture or religion, it is urgent that it be recognized as a greater public concern and priority for us all.

SUPPORTING SURVIVOR SERVICES

FRAMING QUESTION:

What short-term and long-term efforts and services are necessary for victims to rebuild their lives?



SUPPORTING SURVIVOR SERVICES

“WE’RE SMILING NOW BECAUSE WE ARE GETTING ATTENTION, BUT IF YOU LOOK INTO OUR HEARTS THEN YOU’LL KNOW WHAT WE REALLY FEEL.”

-Quote from an acid survivor in *SAVING FACE*

FURTHER INVESTIGATION:

• **Medical/Rehabilitation/Surgical:** Dr. Mohammad Jawad and his team of medical experts in *SAVING FACE* demonstrate how critical reconstructive efforts can be in helping women rebuild their lives. It is also very apparent that more immediate medical care following an attack can be of enormous assistance. What efforts can be implemented to increase medical training and attention to acid attacks?

To learn more, go to <http://www.islamichelp.org.uk/>

• **Psychological and Social Support:** *SAVING FACE* highlights the critical role support services play in reintegrating survivors into their community and empowering each to move forward in their lives.

To learn more, go to <http://acidsurvivorspakistan.org/>

NEXT STEPS FOR ACTION:

- **First Responder Medical Kits:** Creating and disseminating first responder medical kits in hospitals and clinics in the most directly impacted countries.
- **Psycho-social assistance:** Supporting ongoing efforts for survivors to build community, organize further advocacy or legal actions and maintain a safe space that empowers women to continue to rebuild their lives. If a survivor chooses to come forward, these support services become a vital life-line for their long term rehabilitation and safety.
- **Economic reintegration/self-sufficiency:** Providing economic opportunities such as micro-loans or opportunities to gain greater self-sufficiency in domestic affairs can lead to building greater confidence and independence.
- **Education efforts on behalf of survivors:** Organize local film viewings to educate the community about acid attack violence, its causes and consequences, and to mobilize community support for legal and advocacy campaign efforts.
- **Solidarity:** Hold a candlelight vigil on International Women’s Day in your community to demonstrate your support of and solidarity with acid survivors and other victims of gender-based violence globally.
- **Fundraising:** Hold fundraising events to support local organizations working to eradicate acid violence and support survivors of acid attacks.

COMBATING ACID VIOLENCE AS A CRIME

FRAMING QUESTION:

What international laws exist to protect a victim of an acid attack?

What laws exist within countries to protect a victim of an acid attack?

What is necessary for the successful implementation of these laws?



COMBATING ACID VIOLENCE AS A CRIME

“TO ERADICATE ACID VIOLENCE, GOVERNMENTS MUST ADDRESS ITS ROOT CAUSES—INEQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN. IN THE SHORT-TERM, GOVERNMENTS SHOULD TAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS TO ADDRESS ACID VIOLENCE:

- 1. ENACT LAWS THAT ADEQUATELY PUNISH PERPETRATORS OF ATTACKS AND LIMIT THE EASY AVAILABILITY OF ACID,*
- 2. ENFORCE AND IMPLEMENT THOSE LAWS, AND*
- 3. PROVIDE REDRESS TO VICTIMS, INCLUDING COMPENSATION FOR HEALTHCARE COSTS.”*

- Excerpted from COMBATING ACID VIOLENCE IN BANGLADESH, CAMBODIA AND INDIA REPORT, pg. 1.

For the full report go to:

http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/cedaw_crc_contributions/AvonGlobalCenterforWomenandJustice.pdf

FURTHER INVESTIGATION:

International Human Rights Laws and Norms

“OUR REPORT WAS THE FIRST AND ONLY REPORT I KNOW THAT FRAMED ACID VIOLENCE AS AN INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION FOR WHICH GOVERNMENTS HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY RATHER THAN AS JUST A CRIME BETWEEN PEOPLE.”

-Sital Kalantry, Associate Clinical Professor of Law and Faculty Director, Avon Global Center for Women and Justice and primary author of the report COMBATING ACID VIOLENCE IN BANGLADESH, INDIA AND CAMBODIA.

The following international laws and conventions are essential reference points in building a historical and legal understanding of how acid violence is a violation of international human rights.

- **1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):**

While not legally enforceable, UDHR Articles 3 through 9 and Article 16 are important milestones.

<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

- **1979: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women:**

CEDAW is often described as a bill of rights for women with a preamble and articles and defines what constitutes discrimination against women.

By accepting the convention, a country commits to undertake a series of measures to uphold discrimination against women.

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm>

- **1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights:**

Officially acknowledged that all forms of violence against women are human rights violations and that states have a due diligence obligation to prevent such violence from occurring, to protect victims, to punish perpetrators, and to provide compensation to those who have suffered from it.

<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r121.htm>

COMBATING ACID VIOLENCE AS A CRIME

National Laws

Very few countries impacted by acid violence have passed laws by which an acid attack can be prosecuted directly. While it is a promising sign that legislation has been passed in some countries, implementation and institutional adoption of such law varies by country. In some communities the problems are endemic and include widespread governmental corruption, lack of police training and an overall lack of resources that inhibit proper investigation of the crime, protection of victims and prosecution of perpetrators. These issues coupled with the difficulty to collect accurate data necessitate our diligent attention and ongoing advocacy work.

- **Bangladesh:** In 2002, Parliament enacted two laws against acid violence, The Acid Control Act (ACA) and the Acid Crime Control Act (ACCA). Under the Acid Control Act of 2002, the unlicensed production, import, transport, storage, sale, and use of acid can result in a prison term of 3-10 years. Those who possess chemicals and equipment for the unlicensed production of acid can get the same prison term. The ACCA heightens penalties and creates special court procedures for acid attack cases. Key provisions of the ACCA were already in effect prior to its adoption. For the first time through the ACA, the Bangladeshi government regulates and monitors the use, sale, purchase, storage, transportation, import, and export of acid in Bangladesh. Enacting these laws signals a strong commitment on the part of the Bangladeshi government to eradicate acid violence.
- **Cambodia:** In December 2011, a law was passed stipulating that those found guilty of the most serious acid attack offenses face harsh sentences ranging from five years in prison for “intentional violence” using acid to 20 years in prison for “torture and cruel acts.”
- **Pakistan:** The Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Bill was passed by the National Assembly of Pakistan on December 12, 2011. The perpetrators of these acts will now be punished with life imprisonment or at least fourteen years in prison. They will also be given a fine of up to Rs.1 million.

NEXT STEPS FOR ACTION:

Call your representative to/Petition to:

- Advocate for the establishment of a dedicated organization that provides services--medical, legal, psychosocial and rehabilitative--to acid burn survivors in your country if acid violence is prevalent.
- Advocate for the passage of specific legislation to ensure that:
 - (1) acid attacks are criminalized and punished;
 - (2) acid sales are adequately regulated and controlled; and
 - (3) effective surveillance systems are put in place to collect data and monitor trends of acid attacks and other similar burn violence and facial disfigurement crimes.
- Lobby to ensure that these laws are effectively enforced at the local, regional and national levels.
- Investigate the most up to date work happening on the ground through Acid Survivors Trust International Situational Analyses of laws and legal reform in Cambodia, Nepal and Uganda.
<http://www.acidviolence.org/index.php/acid-violence/publications>

Support Lawmakers:

- Vote for representatives in your community who are committed to eradicating all forms of violence against women, including acid violence.

ADDRESSING CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

FRAMING QUESTION:

What role can corporations take in reducing the incidences of acid violence worldwide?

What role can I have as a consumer to support efforts to eradicate acid violence?



ADDRESSING CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

FURTHER INVESTIGATION:

John Ruggie, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations emphasized that companies have an obligation to act with due diligence to prevent violations of international human rights laws. He states,

“COMPANIES MUST TAKE PROACTIVE STEPS TO UNDERSTAND HOW [THEIR] EXISTING AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES MAY AFFECT HUMAN RIGHTS. EVEN WHEN OPERATING IN CONTEXT IN WHICH GOVERNMENTS HAVE NOT ADOPTED LAWS TO PROTECT CITIZENS’ HUMAN RIGHTS, BUSINESSES ARE NOT FREE OF A RESPONSIBILITY TO ACT.”

- *COMBATING ACID VIOLENCE IN BANGLADESH, CAMBODIA AND INDIA, PG. 45*

The report further explains:

- Companies that use acid in their manufacturing process should establish procedures to ensure that acid is handled, stored and disposed of properly to avoid acid theft.
- Companies that distribute acid to individual end-users should ensure that acid containers are labeled to notify users that they contain a dangerous substance and the legal consequences of its misuse.
- Companies that import products manufactured using acid from countries with high rates of acid attacks should verify that companies within their supply chain follow safe handling, storage, labeling, transfer, and disposal procedures and comply with all existing local laws regulating acid.
- Companies that produce and distribute acid in countries with high rates of acid attacks should ensure that their distributors are following safe handling, storage, labeling, transfer, and disposal procedures.

To read the full PDF report, go to: [PDF Combating Acid Violence, Section 5.](#)

NEXT STEPS FOR ACTION:

- Buy products made by acid survivors to support their reintegration and rehabilitation, and to further the work to prevent future acid attacks and punish perpetrators of these crimes.
- Support industry and government efforts to regulate the safe-handling, storage, labeling, transfer and disposal of acid by manufacturers, distributors, and other business and individual users of acid in order to deter the unauthorized use of acid in your community.
- Encourage the replacement of old car batteries with new batteries through recycling programs so that individuals cannot open old batteries to access acid.
- Try to buy products that are free of acid or to ensure that products sold are adequately diluted.

LEADING PREVENTION

FRAMING QUESTION:

What can "I" do to prevent acid violence?



LEADING PREVENTION

FURTHER INVESTIGATION:

Self Education:

There are many international and national NGO's advocating on behalf of survivors that we highly recommend you investigate and support. Please reference our weblinks in this section as a place to start.

Throughout the guide we have referenced the seminal report, *COMBATING ACID VIOLENCE IN BANGLADESH, INDIA AND CAMBODIA*. Please take the time to read this report and contact the organizations listed below as you continue to learn more. Three key ways in which acid violence can be immediately addressed by governments and corporations include:

- **International Monitoring:**

Developing, supporting and implementing systematic reporting mechanisms in which individuals can report and monitor cases.

- **Consumer/Corporate Advocacy:**

Build greater public awareness and pressure around corporate use and misuse of acid particularly in countries where acid violence is more prevalent.

- **Support International NGOs and Institutions Supporting Survivors and Prevention Efforts. See below:**

The *SAVING FACE* film and outreach project has worked closely with the following NGO's and their affiliates in country. We invite you to begin learning more by referencing these organizations.

Acid Survivors Foundation-Pakistan: www.acidsurvivorspakistan.org

Islamic Health: www.islamichelp.org.uk

On the Saving Face website, www.projectsaaave.org, we are currently building an online space where organizations working to support acid survivors or on behalf of eradicating acid violence can be listed.

Please contact us at savingfacefilm@gmail.com if you or your organization would like to be included.

NEXT STEPS FOR ACTION:

- Contact international advocacy organizations working on issues of gender violence and ask them to lobby UN Women to ensure that acid violence is explicitly mentioned in all documents addressing gender-based violence.
- Support organizations at the international and domestic levels working to eradicate acid violence.
- Establish and support a centralized burn registry in each country where acid attacks occur. These registries would provide the forum for researchers to document the prevalence of acid attacks in their country and, in turn, provide the most accurate data to activists and NGOs working to eradicate the crime. The cooperation of health, academic and governmental institutions is critical if the registry is to accurately and efficiently document acid burns and injuries throughout the country.

CO-DIRECTORS STATEMENTS

SHARMEEN OBAID CHINYOY

ACADEMY AWARD® AND EMMY® WINNING PAKISTAN FILMMAKER

SAVING FACE provides insight into the lives of the most oppressed members of Pakistani society. It goes beyond the immediate horrors of acid violence to its prolonged effects. It forces its viewers to empathize with, but also admire the immense strength of the survivors.

As a woman who has never been subjected to gender discrimination in Pakistan, the awareness that such acts occur and are regarded as the norm in segments of Pakistani society deeply affects me. Yet, I believe that stimulating thought about such a sensitive issue is the first step in the direction of alleviating it. The film shows that a healing power exists within the same societies that perpetuate such forms of assault. By drawing attention to the restorative effects of the efforts of other Pakistanis, *SAVING FACE* fosters a feeling of hope and seizing responsibility.

DANIEL JUNGE

ACADEMY AWARD® WINNER AND EMMY® NOMINATED AMERICAN FILMMAKER

People often physically cringe when I tell them the subject of *SAVING FACE*. Indeed, the subject is worthy of it -- the ability of one human being to literally deface another. But I am quick to point out that our challenge as filmmakers, and hopefully what we've accomplished, is to go beyond the horror of these crimes and portray the humanity of the survivors and the small steps Pakistanis are taking to tackle this vexing problem. The film must be more than an expose of horrendous crimes -- it must be a recipe for addressing the problem and a hope for the future.

When I describe the film, people also comment on my bravery in making such a film, which makes me uncomfortable. It is my Pakistani partners, and particularly my co-director Sharmeen, who disregard their personal safety to tell urgent stories like this in their home country. The bravest collaborators on the project are the women who shared their stories with us. Because of their openness to share, we have a tool to help end this cycle of violence.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The team of *SAVING FACE* wish to express our deep gratitude to Zakia and Rukhsana for courageously telling their stories on film, to our NGO partners Acid Survivors Trust International, Acid Survivors Foundation-Pakistan and Islamic Help, to Dr. Mohammad Jawad, Ms. Sarkar Abbass, Ms. Marvi Memon, and to the countless other men and women working tirelessly to eradicate acid violence.

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the efforts of the following individuals who gave their time, expertise and heart to making this viewer's guide accessible for all.

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OUTREACH DIRECTOR, *SAVING FACE*

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