



# BUDRUS

A FILM BY JULIA BACHA

## SPECIAL HONORS

PUMA.Creative Impact Award, 2012  
The Henry Hampton Award for Excellence in Film and Digital Media, 2011  
The Ridenhour Documentary Film Prize, 2011  
Circles of Change Award, 2010  
The Common Ground Award, 2010  
King Hussein Leadership Prize, 2009

## FESTIVAL AWARDS

Best Documentary & Audience Award, Common Memory Intl. Film Festival, Morocco, 2013  
Panorama Audience Award Second Prize, Berlin International Film Festival, 2010  
Special Jury Mention, Tribeca Film Festival, 2010  
Audience Award, San Francisco International Film Festival, 2010  
Honorable Mention, Best Doc. in the Spirit of Freedom Award, Jerusalem Intl. Film Fest, 2010  
Witness Award at Silverdocs Film Festival, 2010  
Honorable Mention of the Jury, Documenta Madrid 10  
Amnesty Italia Award, Pesaro Film Festival, 2010  
Founders Prize, Best of Fest, Nonfiction, Traverse City Film Festival, 2010  
Checkpoints Award, Bergen International Film Festival, 2010  
Festival des Libertés Prize, Festival des Libertés, 2010  
Spirit of Freedom Documentary Award, Bahamas International Film Festival, 2010  
Amnesty's Matter of Act Human Rights Award, Movies That Matter Film Festival, 2011  
Jury Award, Excellence in Documenting a Human Rights Issue, Bellingham Human Rights Fest, 2011

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2009 | USA | 82 mins | Color  
In English, Arabic and Hebrew with English subtitles  
Press materials are available at [www.justvision.org/budrus](http://www.justvision.org/budrus)

# SYNOPSIS

Ayed Morrar, an unlikely community organizer, unites Palestinians from all political factions and Israelis to save his village from destruction by Israel's Separation Barrier. Victory seems improbable until his 15-year-old daughter, Iltezam, launches a women's contingent that quickly moves to the front lines.

Struggling side by side, father and daughter unleash an inspiring, yet little-known movement in the Occupied Palestinian Territories that is still gaining ground today. In an action-filled documentary chronicling this movement from its infancy, *Budrus* shines a light on people who choose nonviolence to confront a threat yet remain virtually unknown to the world. The movie is directed by award-winning filmmaker Julia Bacha (co-writer and editor *Control Room*, co-director *Encounter Point*), and produced by Bacha, Palestinian journalist Rula Salameh, and filmmaker and human rights advocate Ronit Avni (formerly of WITNESS, director of *Encounter Point*).

While this film is about one Palestinian village, it tells a much bigger story about what is possible in the Middle East. Ayed succeeded in doing what many people believe to be impossible: he united local Palestinian political factions, including Fatah and Hamas; he brought women to the heart of the struggle by encouraging his daughter Iltezam's leadership; and he welcomed hundreds of Israelis to cross into Palestinian territory for the first time and join this nonviolent effort.

*Budrus* includes diverse voices from the Palestinian leaders of the movement and their Israeli allies to an Israeli military spokesman, Doron Spielman, and Yasmine Levy, the Israeli border police officer stationed in the village at that time. While many documentaries about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict either romanticize the notion of peace, or dwell entirely on the suffering of victims to the conflict, this film focuses on the success of a Palestinian-led nonviolent movement.

In a keynote address immediately following the debut of *Budrus* at a Gala screening at the Dubai International Film Festival in December 2009, Her Majesty Queen Noor Al Hussein of Jordan praised the film, stating that *Budrus*: "Gives an enormous amount of hope... It's a story which will have an impact and can help bring change."

# CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

## **AYED MORRAR**

A leader of the movement in Budrus, Ayed organized the first “Popular Committee Against the Wall” in the West Bank by uniting all local Palestinian political factions, including Hamas and Fatah, and encouraging hundreds of Israelis to cross into the Occupied Palestinian Territories and demonstrate in support of his village. When challenged by his teenage daughter, he welcomed the launch of a women’s contingent that quickly moved to the front lines. Ayed chose nonviolence “because it is in the best interest of the Palestinian people to follow this path.”

## **ILTEZAM MORRAR**

Ayed’s 15-year-old daughter was the first villager to succeed in getting past the Israeli border police and stopping a bulldozer by courageously jumping in front of it. Her fearlessness galvanizes the entire village and affirms the importance of women in the movement. The demonstrations in Budrus marked the first time that Iltezam, like most of the village’s youth, met Israelis who were not soldiers or settlers. She says, “I visited many times my father in prison and all the Israelis that I met were very, very bad, but now I know that not all Israelis are the same. Some of them want to live together in peace.”

## **KOBI SNITZ**

Israeli mathematician who joined the demonstrations in Budrus because of his belief that direct action was missing in the Israeli peace movement at the time. “When we got about 200 meters from the soldiers, and they were armed... I was sure we were going to die. But there were others around me who weren’t even cowering. And gradually I got over my fear and got stronger from their strength and determination.”

## **AHMED AWWAD**

A Hamas member who works with Ayed to mobilize the people of Budrus, Ahmed talks about nonviolence as a strategic tool, best suited to achieve the village’s aims. He expresses surprise at the Israeli civilians who come to support the demonstrations by putting their bodies on the line and confronting other Israelis serving in the military: “We had already heard that there were some Israelis who wanted peace with the Palestinians. But these demonstrations exceeded expectations. . . . In these marches I saw these Israeli voices in real life; it wasn’t just something I heard about.”

## **YASMINE LEVI**

Yasmine is sent to Budrus as a squad commander in the border police and comes face to face with the women participating in the demonstrations. Her responsibility is to ensure that the Barrier gets built according to the path set by the military. Over the course of the demonstrations she develops a complex relationship with the women in the village who call her by name in their chants. She says, "Even if the women were beaten or shot, they had no problem with it. They went to all lengths to ensure their land would remain theirs."

## **DORON SPIELMAN**

A spokesperson for the Israeli army, Doron does not believe nonviolent demonstrations can change the route of the Separation Barrier. He believes that the goal to provide security "trumps everything." For him, the use of Palestinian property to build the Separation Barrier "is extremely unfortunate to the lives of the Palestinian people, however is less unfortunate than the death of an Israeli civilian."

# FILMMAKER BIOS

## **JULIA BACHA**

Director | Producer | Writer | Editor

Julia Bacha is an award-winning filmmaker who has worked on films exhibited at the Sundance, Tribeca, Berlin, Jerusalem, and Dubai International Film Festivals, and broadcast on the BBC, HBO, Sundance, CBC and Al Arabiya television channels. Julia wrote and co-directed the feature documentary *Encounter Point* (Typecast Films, 2006), which follows the courageous efforts of Palestinians and Israelis who lost something precious to the conflict and are nevertheless working toward justice and peace in the Middle East. *Encounter Point* premiered at Tribeca Film Festival in 2006 and won five major international awards, including the Audience Award for Best Documentary at the San Francisco Film Festival. Julia also co-wrote and edited Jehane Noujaim's critically acclaimed documentary, *Control Room* (Magnolia Pictures, 2004), which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and for which she was nominated to the Writer's Guild of America Award in 2005. Julia is a Senior Producer and Media Director at Just Vision. She studied Middle Eastern history and politics at Columbia University and upon graduation received the prestigious Phi Beta Kappa award.

## **RONIT AVNI**

Producer | Executive Producer

Ronit Avni, filmmaker and human rights advocate, directed and produced the award-winning feature documentary film, *Encounter Point*, which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2006 and won five major international awards. She is also the founder and Executive Director of Just Vision, a non-profit organization that creates media about Palestinian and Israeli civilians who are working to resolve the conflict nonviolently. She has co-produced short videos and online video advocacy features in collaboration with filmmakers in Senegal, Burkina Faso, the U.S. and Brazil while working at Peter Gabriel's organization, WITNESS. She appeared on The Oprah Winfrey Show in 2005 and her work was featured on Oprah.com. Ronit was named a Young Global Leader in 2009 and joined the YGL Network.

## **RULA SALAMEH**

Producer

Rula is the Outreach Coordinator at Just Vision and a longtime Palestinian journalist who co-founded the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation in 1993, following the Oslo Agreement. Rula has worked as a reporter for Qatari Radio where she became the first Palestinian to cover the Gulf Region, and for the Arab Media Center, the main press office in East Jerusalem during the first Intifada. She was also a producer of the main live political program at Ajjyal Radio, an FM Radio Station in Ramallah. Prior to joining Just Vision, Rula was the Project Coordinator for Middle East Non-Violence and Democracy (MEND) for three years.

## **JEHANE NOUJAIM**

### **Executive Producer**

Jehane Noujaim began her career as a photographer and filmmaker in Cairo, Egypt. She attended Harvard University and was awarded the Gardiner Fellowship. She then joined the MTV news and documentary division as a producer for the series *Unfiltered*. Noujaim left her producing job at MTV to produce and direct *Startup.com*, which played as part of Sundance's documentary competition in 2001. The film won numerous awards, including the Directors Guild of America and IDA Awards for best documentary. In 2004, she directed the highly acclaimed film *Control Room*, which premiered at Sundance in 2004. After winning the TED Prize in 2006, Jehane used her wish to organize Pangea Day, a 4-hour, live show featuring short films used for social change, which was broadcast internationally in 2008.

## **GEETA GANDBHIR**

### **Supervising Editor | Consulting Producer**

Geeta has over eighteen years of editing experience in film and television. She has worked with distinguished, award-winning directors and producers such as Spike Lee, Robert Altman and Sam Pollard. In television, she has worked for PBS, MTV, Discovery, Court TV, Oxygen Media and many others. Recent works include the PBS series *African American Lives* with Henry Louis Gates, the four-hour documentary *When the Levees Broke* for filmmaker Spike Lee for which she won an Emmy Award for Best Editing, as well as several other documentaries for HBO. Most recently, she completed work on Edward Norton's film entitled *By the People: The Election of Barack Obama*, which will be released by HBO.

# CREDITS

**Directed by**  
Julia Bacha

**Produced by**  
Ronit Avni  
Julia Bacha  
Rula Salameh

**Filmed by**  
Shai Pollack  
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**Editor**  
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Jehane Noujaim  
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Darius Fisher

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**Graphics & Animation**  
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Chris Kirk

**Consulting Producers**  
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Anat Langer-Gal  
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Adel Abd el Qader

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Brandon Sipes  
Oren Ziv - Active Stills