

**HARVARD
UNIVERSITY**



**HARVARD
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Bangui, Central African republic, June 23, 2012

To whom it may concern,

This letter is written in strong support of Tina DiFelicianantonio and Jane C. Wagner's proposed documentary, "Seeking Refuge".

Over the last few years, colleagues and I have conducted research research to document the opinions and attitudes of survivors of mass violence in Iraq, northern Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Central African Republic among others. Our objective was to better understand what it means to be a victim and the relation between victims and reconstruction. In this process, I have witnessed first-hand the long term impact of torture and other human rights abuses. Studies I have published in the Journal of the American Medical Association and other journals echo the filmmakers' need to understand how torture impacts survivors and their families for the rest of their lives.

But perhaps more importantly, their documentary proposal highlights the survivors own agency in building their future. Time and time again, our studies have showed the role affected communities play in shaping their own future, how resilient war affected communities can be and how they can learn to cope and live with the long term impact of human rights abuses and violence.

While the documentary follows a different population than the one I have typically worked with (refugees based in the US rather than population in affected areas), recent interviews with the Cambodian diaspora based in the US taught me the value of opening a dialogue on both the traumatic events they experienced and the recovery that followed.

Tina DiFelicianantonio and Jane C. Wagner have assembled a talented and thoughtful group of people for their advisory board. I have no doubt that the resulting documentary will give visibility to the plight of victims of heinous crimes, while inspiring them and others to help rebuild shattered lives.

Best regards,

Patrick Vinck