



PRESS RELEASE: 7th September 2012

**Women to claim their rights in childbirth with
1,000 Global Premieres set to launch the landmark
FREEDOM FOR BIRTH Film**

Human rights abuses during childbirth will be highlighted in a powerful new documentary to be launched on 20th September 2012.

Described by the filmmakers as "the biggest event in the history of birth activism", ***FREEDOM FOR BIRTH*** will be screened simultaneously in 1,000 locations in over 50 countries in 17 different languages.

Featuring a Who's Who of 40 international birth experts, academics, Human Rights lawyers, doctors and midwives, the film calls for a radical shake-up of the world's maternity systems.

Made by British filmmaking couple Toni Harman and Alex Wakeford, ***Freedom for Birth*** tells the story of Hungarian midwife Agnes Gereb, imprisoned for supporting women during homebirths, and the subsequent successful European Court of Human Rights case that has major implications for childbirth around the world.

Filmmaker Toni Harman says, "the court ruling means that every birthing woman in Europe has the legal right to decide where and how she gives birth."

The 1,000 ***Freedom For Birth*** premiere screenings will start at a breakfast screening in New Zealand and end in Hawaii. The day also includes screenings at the Cambridge Film Festival, Yale University, the Motherhood Museum in New York and at the Royal College of Midwives in London.

Cathy Warwick, Chief Executive of the Royal College of Midwives (RCM), says: "The making of this film, which the RCM is supporting, will go a long way to help make skilled maternity care a reality for those women who currently do not have access to it."

Lesley Page, President of the RCM adds, "Too many women across the world are dying or suffering terribly because of a lack of skilled maternity care. This

is unacceptable and I call on all Governments to give women the right and access to safe care in pregnancy and childbirth.”

Hermine Hayes-Klein, US lawyer and organiser of the the recent Human Rights In Childbirth conference at the Hague says, “**Freedom For Birth** holds the answer to changing the system. Birth will change when women realise they have a right to meaningful support for childbirth and claim that right. Birth will change when women stand up against the abuses that are currently suffered in such high numbers and say, No More.”

Filmmaker Alex Wakeford concludes, “With the release of **Freedom For Birth**, we hope millions of women become aware of their legal rights. With stories of forced caesarean sections and persecution of those providing woman-focused care, it doesn’t make for easy viewing but has the potential to spark a revolution in maternity care across the world. In fact, we are calling this the Mothers’ Revolution.”

ENDS

Contact Information:

Toni Harman, Producer/Director, *Freedom For Birth*
Email: info@altofilms.com +44 (0) 1273 747837 / +44 (0) 7770 794233

Website: <http://freedomforbirth.com>
High resolution still images available on request.

Additional Notes

Additional information about **Freedom For Birth** can be found on the website: <http://freedomforbirth.com>

1,000 screenings are happening on Thursday 20th September, 2012 in the following countries: England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Germany, France, Denmark, Spain, Greece, Italy, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria, Poland, Bulgaria, Croatia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Serbia, Belgium, Hungary, Israel, Palestine, Sweden, Malta, Finland, Iceland, Russia, USA, Canada, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Panama, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Philippines, China, South Africa, Kenya, UAE, Kuwait, Dubai and India.

The film has been translated into 17 different languages: English, Bulgarian, Chinese, Croatian, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Polish, Portuguese (Portugal), Portuguese (Brazilian), Russian, Slovak, Slovenian and Spanish.

The film has been selected for screening in the Cambridge Film Festival on 20th September. <http://www.cambridgefilmfestival.org.uk/>

Toni Harman and Alex Wakeford are a filmmaking couple who have set up a cross-media global film project called **One World Birth** to provide educational videos featuring the world's leading birth experts <http://oneworldbirth.net>

Freedom For Birth is Harman and Wakeford's third documentary film about birth. They were inspired to make the film following their own difficult birth four years ago when a cascade of interventions led to an emergency c-section.

Case studies of parents affected by human rights issues in childbirth are available on request.

Interviews are also available with the following international birth experts:
Ina May Gaskin, Midwife & Winner of the 2011 Right Livelihood Award (the alternative Nobel Prize)
Robbie Davis-Floyd PhD, Medical / Cultural Anthropologist, University of Texas
Professor Lesley Page, President, Royal College of Midwives