

Thank you for your patience, and for your initial outreach to us.

Given the very serious nature of the allegations, we have been doing our due diligence in the days since the article on *Sabaya* appeared in *The New York Times* to make sure we have accurate information from all parties. Since the publishing of the article, the filmmakers and producers have released statements detailing the consents obtained, and that they were responsive to objections from any participants and obscured their identity. This has also been confirmed by the Swedish Film Institute and Dogwoof. Statements were also released from the lead subjects and elements of those statements appear [here](#) and [here](#). The filmmakers assert that *The New York Times* story contains erroneous reporting and have submitted a letter to the editor rebutting the assertions made.

When the filmmakers submitted their work to the Festival for consideration they declared that they had all consents needed in place. The filmmakers stand by their assertion that they discharged their duty of care using currently accepted standards and practices to obtain informed consent from the film's subjects. From what we have learned so far, the information does not contradict that assertion.

Whether current accepted practices are *in fact* sufficient to obtain informed consent is a vital conversation to be having and we value the opportunity to be a part of it. We also value and support the work being done by many longstanding and new advocates in this field, from the new [Documentary Accountability Working Group](#) and others including the [Murad Code](#) and [the Dart Center](#) to move survivors' rights to the center of considerations when obtaining informed consent, especially in instances of conflict-related sexual violence.

What the *Sabaya* reporting has made even more clear is the importance of a field-wide (including filmmakers, festivals, funders, foundations) dialogue around informed consent and, more broadly, how we can build the capacity to be "trauma-informed" when the circumstances call for it. This is an issue that we must consider in our work both as curators of the Festival and funders and supporters of documentary filmmakers through our work at the Institute. We also recognise that this is a complex area, made even more so by the changing field of documentary and journalistic practice. In addition, we must ensure that the wishes of those who *are* giving informed consent have agency in the recounting of their own experiences.

Sundance Institute is committed to advocating for free expression and for the rights of independent filmmakers and we care deeply about the safety and security of contributors to their work. This is an area that is ripe for us to continue to explore as Festival programmers and funders.

We appreciate the dialogue this has created, and this discussion will help us in our future work.