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IRIN DOCUMENTARY TAKES TOP HONORS AT FILM FESTIVAL

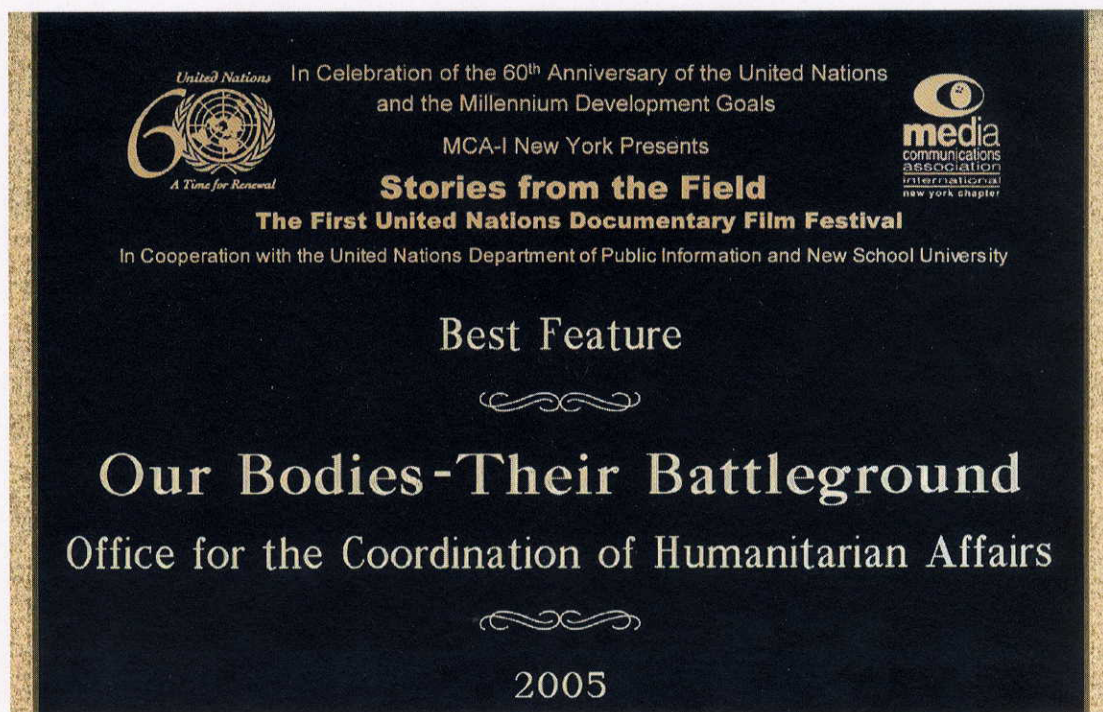
(New York, 25 May 2005): The Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) has won one of two judges' awards at the first United Nations Documentary Film Festival, held at the New School University in New York on 21-22 May. IRIN is part of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

"Our bodies...their battleground", a documentary film that highlights the sexual violence crisis facing women and girls in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Liberia, received the award of "Best Feature" for documentaries over 15 minutes. The film gives a voice to victims of rape, and seeks to challenge the culture of impunity that allows this violence to continue unchecked. The film was co-funded by the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

The President of the New York chapter of Media Communications Association International, Corinna Sager, told those attending the opening reception that the hard-hitting film had rendered the judges speechless and had been the only film to receive a unanimous top vote by all judges.

The "Stories from the Field" festival was a joint undertaking between the United Nations Department of Public Information, the New School University and Media Communications Association International, in celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the United Nations and the Millennium Development Goals. Some 80 films were submitted with 30 screened over the two-day festival.

"Our bodies...their battleground" was produced by Nicky Chalk and Sylvia Spring, with support from the head of the IRIN film unit, David Gough. The next film in the series on gender-based violence, *The Razor's Edge*, on female genital mutilation, has just been released.



To view the film online visit www.irinnews.org. For CD-Rom versions, please contact: David Gough (Nairobi) gough@irinnews.org, Joanne Clark (Geneva) joanne@irinnews.org, or Mark Dalton (New York) daltonm@un.org