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NEW YORK PREMIERE

FRONTRUNNER: The Afghan Woman Who Surprised the World

Monday, March 30, 2009

6:00 pm ET

New York

IN PERSON:

Dr. Massouda Jalal, former Minister of Women's Affairs in Afghanistan

Dr. M. Nadir Atash, Chairman and CEO, Emerald View Group

S.K. Guha, Institutional Development Advisor, UNIFEM

Shireen Zaman, Vital Voices Director, North Africa and Middle East

Cosponsored by **Vital Voices** and **WomenRULE**

The Paley Center held a special premiere screening of *FRONTRUNNER; The Afghan Woman Who Surprised the World*, a documentary by Virginia Williams. The subject of the documentary, **Dr. Massouda Jalal**, a courageous woman who ran for president of Afghanistan in 2004, talked about her campaign—against all odds—to become the president.

Dr. Jalal received a standing ovation from the full-house audience following the film. When asked if she would run again, she explained that without the support of the international community a further run for office would be a futile effort. She explained that the current government of Afghanistan has all the support from the US and other countries and those in power have deliberately excluded women while they have included the narco trade and many elements of corruption. Her candidacy confronted Afghanistan's elders and religious leaders and challenged the government to uphold the new Afghan constitution and confirm the equal rights of women in her country.

The evening began with a reception featuring Afghan food and a display of beautiful jewelry and items made by the women of Afghanistan. Vital Voices cosponsored the event and brought Dr. Jalal from Afghanistan to participate on a panel with **Shireen Zaman**, Vital Voices Director, North Africa and Middle East; **S. K. Guha**, Institutional Development Advisor, UNIFEM; and **Dr. M. Nadir Atash**, Chairman and CEO, Emerald View Group. **Rory O'Connor**, the executive producer of the film, moderated the discussion.



Honorary guests (from left) Dr. Nadir Atash, Shireen Zaman, Dr. Massouda Jalal, President of Paley Center for Media, Pat Mitchell, in NYC, Virginia Williams and Rory O'Connor