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**POV's "Promised Land" Examines South Africa's Greatest Challenge Since Liberation: Redistribution of Land; New Documentary Airs Tuesday, July 6, 2010, on PBS**

*A co-production of the National Black Programming Consortium, American Documentary/POV and the Diverse Voices Project*

"Land is the issue; it's the straw that could break this camel's back. If we don't all grow beyond our positions of the past in the way we tackle this issue, we will fail together collectively."

– Roger Roman, Land for Peace, South Africa

***MEDIA ALERT – FACT SHEET***

National Air

Date:

**Promised Land** has its national broadcast premiere on **Tuesday, July 6, 2010**, at 10 p.m. on PBS (check local listings), as part of the regular season of the [POV \(Point of View\)](#) documentary series. Now in its 23rd year, POV is American television's longest-running independent documentary series and is the winner of a Special Emmy for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking and the International Documentary Association's IDA Award for Best Continuing Series

The Film:

Though apartheid ended in South Africa in 1994, economic injustices between blacks and whites remain unresolved. As revealed in Yoruba Richen's **Promised Land**, the most potentially explosive issue is land. The film follows two black communities as they struggle to reclaim land from white owners, some of whom who have lived there for generations. Amid rising tensions and wavering government policies, the land issue remains South Africa's "ticking time bomb," with far-reaching consequences for all sides. **Promised Land** captures multiple perspectives of citizens struggling to create just solutions.

In one legal struggle, the impoverished, 9,000-member Mekgareng community seeks the return of 42,000 acres of rich farmland now in the hands of white farmers and developers; in the other, an extended, middle-class black family descendant from landowner Abram Molamu claims 3,800 acres owned by a few white farmers. The black South Africans have family and tribal traditions and the ugly history of black expulsion from the land to make their case. They also have the government led by the African National Congress (ANC), which promised upon taking power in 1994 to redistribute a third of the land within 10 years.

Watch the trailer and learn more at [www.pbs.org/pov/promisedland](http://www.pbs.org/pov/promisedland).

Filmmaker's

Statement:

"I remember the day when Nelson Mandela was released and how practically my entire neighborhood walked to nearby Yankee Stadium to hear him speak when he subsequently came to New York," says Yoruba Richen. "Then I began hearing about the harsh realities — entrenched poverty, HIV and land inequality.

"When I began to read the stories of landless black claimants, who were spending years

trying to prove that they were the original inhabitants, and white farm owners, who were contending with the reality of having to give up their land, I thought it would make for a revealing documentary. Though there was great mistrust, all sides freely shared their lives, feelings and opinions with me, reflecting a shared belief in South Africa's future."

Filmmaker Bio: Yoruba Richen (Director/Producer)

Yoruba Richen is a journalist and documentary filmmaker who has worked on films that have aired on HBO, A&E and BET. She was the co-producer of "Take it From Me," a documentary exploring the effects of welfare reform on New York City women, which was broadcast on POV in 2001. Richen was also an associate producer for the investigative unit of ABC News, as well as a producer for the independent radio and television news program "Democracy Now." She is the recipient of numerous grants, including a Fulbright Award and a Diversity Development Fund grant from the Independent Television Service (ITVS) and an International Reporting Project (IRP) grant.

Richen, who received a bachelor's degree from Brown University and master's degree in city planning from the University of California, Berkeley, is an adjunct professor at the City University of New York Graduate School of Journalism. She is currently developing *The New Black*, a documentary that examines the complicated, combative and overlapping histories of the African-American and LGBTQ civil rights movements. Richen was born and raised in Harlem in New York City and currently resides in Brooklyn.

In the News: Reuters: South Africa farmers union against speedy land reform, June 9, 2010. "South Africa's largest farmers group on Wednesday said government plans to speed up land reform would undermine farmers' confidence and affect the security of food supplies in Africa's biggest economy. South Africa's land affairs department recently published a strategic plan for 2010-2013 in which it proposed options to speed up land transfers to the black majority." Complete story: <http://af.reuters.com/article/southAfricaNews/idAFLDE6581HV20100609>

*Wall Street Journal*: Soweto turns anger on ANC, by Peter Wonacott, June 9, 2010. "In 1994, the township of Soweto helped midwife a new nation, toppling a white racist regime after years of protests and electing Nelson Mandela as South Africa's first black president. Today, Soweto is home to upscale shopping malls, tidy row houses and a state-of-the-art sports stadium that will host Friday's opening of the World Cup. As barriers to government and jobs have fallen and foreign investment has picked up, a black middle class has emerged. . . . But prosperity has spread only so far. . . . many here now complain of oppression of a different sort: government neglect." Complete story: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703957604575272622631938324.html>

Featured  
in the Film:

Mekgareng claimants: Nelly Makhafollil, Community Member; Philip Rafedile, Community Leader; and Solly Selibi, Chair, Mekgareng Land Claim Committee. Descendants of Abram Molamu: Kathy Mothlabane, Pinky Gumede and Steve Bogatsu. White Landowners: Patrick Jonsson and Johan Pretorius, on the Mekgareng Claim; Hannes Visser on the Molamu Land Claim; Land for Peace founder Roger Roman. Also Regional Land Claims Commissioner Blessing Mphela.

Credits:

Director/Producer:	Yoruba Richen
Associate Producer:	Nadine Wilmot
Editor:	Jessica Reynolds
Cinematographer:	Shandu Nesengani
Original Music:	Kathryn Bostic

POV Series Credits:

Executive Producer:	Simon Kilmurry
Executive Vice President:	Cynthia López

**Promised Land** is a co-production of the National Black Programming Consortium, American Documentary/POV and the Diverse Voices Project, *with funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.*

Running Time: 56:46

Awards,

Festivals: Fledgling Fund Award for Socially Conscious Documentaries, 2009  
Full Frame Documentary Film Festival, 2010

POV Website: POV's **Promised Land** companion website, [www.pbs.org/pov/promisedland](http://www.pbs.org/pov/promisedland), offers a streaming video trailer of the film, an interview with the filmmaker, a list of related websites, organizations and books, a lesson plan, a discussion guide and these special features:

- Q&A with land-reform expert Edward Lahiff;
- Q&A with Roger Roman, the white South African farmer who gave away his land and founded Land for Peace;

Outreach: POV works with public television stations and national and community-based groups across the country to foster community dialogue around the issues presented in the film. For a list of upcoming screenings or if you are interested in organizing a screening event for **Promised Land**, go to: <http://www.pbs.org/pov/outreach> or email: [events@pov.org](mailto:events@pov.org).

POV also works with nationally recognized media educator Dr. Faith Rogow to develop a discussion guide with background information to help event organizers carry out discussions around the film's content. Cari Ladd has created the lesson plan. The materials are available free of charge at [www.pbs.org/pov/promisedland](http://www.pbs.org/pov/promisedland).

Pressroom: Visit POV's pressroom, [www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom](http://www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom), for press releases, downloadable art, filmmaker biographies, transcripts and special features.

POV: Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and now in its 23rd season on PBS, the award-winning **POV** series is the longest-running showcase on American television to feature the work of today's best independent documentary filmmakers. Airing June through September, with primetime specials during the year, **POV** has brought more than 300 acclaimed documentaries to millions nationwide and has a Webby Award-winning online series, *POV's Borders*. Since 1988, **POV** has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. More information is available at [www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov).

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