

The Dictator Hunter
75 minutes, 2007, U.S.A.
The Cinema Guild
Dictator: Klaartje Quirijns
Language: English

Human rights activists and survivors of repressive regimes around the world are fighting to end the impunity of authoritarian leaders. The *Dictator Hunter* follows one such activist, Human Rights Watch (HRW) lawyer Reed Brody, as he tries to bring Hisse'ne Habre', Chad's former dictator (1982-1990), to trial. The film is an enlightening account of the challenges faced and sacrifices made by activists and their families in their commitment to bring justice to the victims. The resolve of the survivors in helping with such efforts and speaking up, in particular former political prisoner Souleymane Guengueng, the inclusion of interviews with Brody's wife and son, a former torturer now living in Paris, politicians, Chadians, and other HRW staff humanizes the stories behind the struggle to prosecute the dictator and add credibility and depth to Brody's fight.

Idealist conflict resolutionists and rights advocates should be aware that in the political arena if the government of a nation sees nothing to gain in making a public statement supporting the trial of another head of state, it will not act on it. The *Dictator Hunter* captures this dynamic and the importance of political maneuvers and hidden interests that can hinder or facilitate the prosecution of leaders with human rights violations records. This is exemplified through the meeting between the US. Congressman and Brody and Guengueng, and the resistance of Senegal to make a decision as to whether Habre' should be tried in that country.

Image creation and the ability of any party to manipulate it may hinder or contribute to resolution and closure in the aftermath of repression. In the case of Habre', his lawyer and supporters are shown to portray him in a positive light as the hero that defeated Libya's Muammar al-Gaddafi. Brody and the Chadian survivors of his regime, on the other hand, portray him as the methodic and cruel torturer and murderer of hundreds.

Students and the general public interested in human rights, Africa and conflict will find this documentary to be a captivating, easy paced and all encompassing film. Inexperienced conflict resolutionists, graduate students, and rights activists will see it as an informative testimonial to the future obstacles they may find in their pursue of peace, justice and reconciliation.

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