

**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE****CONTACT**

Aisha Almada, ITVS
415-356-8383
aisha.almada@itvs.org

For downloadable images,
visit pbs.org/pressroom

PBS'S INDEPENDENT LENS SET TO PREMIERE "THREE CHAPLAINS," A DOCUMENTARY FOLLOWING MUSLIM LEADERS INCLUDING THE FIRST FEMALE MUSLIM CHAPLAIN IN THE U.S. MILITARY, DAYS BEFORE VETERANS DAY

SEPTEMBER 5, 2023

*Filmmaker David Washburn Captures Three Military
Chaplains Who Combat Islamophobia While Promoting
Interfaith Understanding*

(San Francisco, CA) September 5, 2023— A new INDEPENDENT LENS documentary profiles three Muslim chaplains who aim to make change in one of America's most powerful institutions—the military. From filmmaker David Washburn ("An American Mosque"), "Three Chaplains" follows three current Muslim military chaplains. The film uncovers the trials and triumphs of their experiences and dedication to upholding First Amendment rights, while striving for equality and religious freedom.

"Three Chaplains" will premiere on PBS's INDEPENDENT LENS on November 6, 2023, at 10 p.m. ET (check local listings). The film will also be available to stream on the [PBS App](#).

With more than 20 years of service under his belt, Air Force Chaplain Rafael Lantigua is a vital resource and confidant for young service members, as fellow military members can turn to him to learn about Islam, discover faith, and build resilience. For Army Colonel Khallid Shabazz, a Louisiana native who recently became the U.S. military's highest-ranking Muslim clergyman, faith and service go hand-in-hand. Shabazz leans on past challenges, including molestation and gun violence, and ongoing pressures to inspire action in underrepresented service members. Newcomer Saleha Jabeen, an immigrant from India, has her sights set on becoming the first female Muslim chaplain, despite skepticism from her loved ones and support system.

ITVS

1435 FOLSOM STREET
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94103
T. 415 356 8383
F. 415 356 8391
[PBS.ORG/INDEPENDENTLENS](https://pbs.org/independentlens)

Through grounding their faith, Lantigua, Shabazz, and Jabeen have risen through the ranks, serving as symbols for progressive change within the U.S. Department of Defense, while challenging long-held notions of what it means to serve your country.

“I was driven to create this film after years of storytelling partnerships with American Muslim veterans. I came to appreciate the role Muslim chaplains play in the Department of Defense through witnessing the fearlessness and dedication of Rafael, Khallid, and Saleha. These three Americans illustrate how Muslim chaplains support the U.S. military and break down commonly held stereotypes about Muslims in America,” said Washburn. “My hope is that ‘Three Chaplains’ can reshape viewers’ sense of what a military leader looks like, beyond the pervasive Hollywood image, and to show people that religious diversity is truly part of everyday life in America.”

“Public media offers the perfect venue for ‘Three Chaplains’ because it provides a conversation-starting window into the everyday realities that thousands of Muslims serving in our U.S. military face,” said Lois Vossen, executive producer of INDEPENDENT LENS. “We’re honored to world premiere such a poignant documentary that provides thoughtful testimony to the state of the nation, and spotlights those working to transform the culture of America from within.

“Three Chaplains” is co-funded by the ITVS Open Call funding initiative. Visit pbs.org/threechaplains to learn more about the film.

About the Filmmakers

David Washburn, Director/Producer

David Washburn has partnered with Muslim storytellers for over a decade. His documentary, “An American Mosque,” aired on public television nationwide and was acquired by Al Jazeera. He developed “Three Chaplains” from his short film series featuring Muslim veterans that ran online in *The Washington Post*, *San Diego Union Tribune*, and NBC News.

Razi Jafri, Producer

Razi Jafri makes films about America’s changing cultural landscape. His previous film, “Hamtramck, USA” (SXSW 2020) chronicles democracy in America’s first Muslim-majority city. He is an alumnus of the Sundance Producers Fellowship. His projects have been funded by the Ford Foundation, Doris Duke Foundation, Knight Foundation, and CAAM.

CREDITS

Director	David Washburn
Producers	Razi Jafri David Washburn
Executive Producers	Sally Jo Fifer Lois Vossen

ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS

INDEPENDENT LENS is an Emmy® Award-winning PBS documentary series. With founding executive producer Lois Vossen, the series has been honored with 10 Academy Award nominations and features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by ITVS, INDEPENDENT LENS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Acton Family Giving, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, and National Endowment for the Arts. Stream anytime on the PBS App. For more visit pbs.org/independentlens.

ABOUT ITVS

Independent Television Services (ITVS) is the largest co-producer of independent documentaries in the United States. For more than 30 years, the San Francisco nonprofit has funded and partnered with documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning titles and premieres them on our Emmy Award-winning PBS series, INDEPENDENT LENS. ITVS titles appear on PBS, WORLD, NETA, and can be streamed on various digital platforms including the PBS App. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Acton Family Giving, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, Wyncote Foundation. For more information, visit itvs.org.

###