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Manuel Rivera-Ortiz Foundation Awards Alfonso Moral of Spain 2014 Prize for Documentary Short Film and Opens 2015 Call for Entries

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New York, NY 9 JANUARY 2015 — Inspired by a story of war, family dreams, dashed hopes and new paths, The Manuel Rivera-Ortiz Foundation today announced that Alfonso Moral of Spain has been awarded its second annual Documentary Short Film prize. His film, *A City Without Dreams*, documents the struggles of a Syrian refugee and his family in Beirut against the backdrop of the war in their hometown of Aleppo.

Selected by the Foundation Board, Moral will receive a US\$5000 prize for best documentary “Short-Short” film. *A City Without Dreams* tells the story of Nouri, a man who fled Syria in the summer of 2012 with his girlfriend and young son. Leaving behind a city at war, the documentary, filmed in Beirut, Lebanon and Aleppo, Syria, depicts the lost dreams of an entire Syrian generation.

“Our foundation’s keystone is centered on the well-being of all people. As a journalist, reportage is the mode, the eyewitness that helps protect humanity from itself,” said Manuel Rivera-Ortiz, MROF founder. “Alfonso Moral’s film covers everything I had hoped this foundation would be — a beacon of hope for people because every life matters regardless of belief, religion, education, or money.”

Vividly contrasting the plight they fled against the contempt and rejection they faced as refugees in a city like Beirut, Moral's film stood out from among submissions from around the globe. Alfonso Moral was born and raised in Spain and is now based in Beirut.

The Foundation Board also gave honorable mention to the work of Emily Harrold of the USA for her work depicting the reporting of The Holocaust by The New York Times during World War II, and to Leonard Pongo of Belgium for his film questioning faith, politics, exploitation and religion in the context of independent Protestant churches in Congo DR. The films of all ten 2014 finalists can be viewed on the foundation's website.

"Of the almost one million Syrian refugees in Lebanon, many live in the poverty and despair of hundreds of tent camps scattered across the country," explained Alfonso Moral. "I felt it important to go beyond the tents and the bullets shown by traditional media and put a human face on the struggles of a Syrian generation of young artists and entrepreneurs that had so much ambition and hope prior to the civil war."

This announcement coincides with the *2015 Call for Entries* that is currently underway. Photographers and filmmakers from around the world are encouraged to submit original work covering disenfranchised communities. One submission will be selected in each category to receive US\$5,000 in funding. The documentary photography grant will be awarded for the completion or start and completion of a print photographic project. The documentary short-short film prize will also be awarded to an outstanding filmmaker for an already completed film project. All entries must be submitted by March 31, 2015. Rules and guidelines are available on the foundation website. The grant laureate will be announced in July at the new foundation home in Arles, France, during Les Rencontres d'Arles.

"At a time when journalists are under attack for the freedoms they champion — sadly demonstrated by the brutal attack on French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, the work of Alfonso Moral, and all of our photographers and filmmakers, stands as a beacon of righteousness and hope for the world," said Manuel Rivera-Ortiz.

About the Foundation

Established in 2010, The Manuel Rivera-Ortiz Foundation for Documentary Photography & Film is a 501(c)(3) Not-for-Profit Organization committed to positive social discourse in underrepresented communities throughout the world by encouraging emerging photographers working in developing nations to keep their lenses fixed on the plight of the poor and disenfranchised. Headquartered in New York, the foundation is a charitable trust serving the international photographic and film community through exhibitions, publishing, grants and other curatorial projects. For additional information, please visit www.mrofoundation.org.