



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**JUJU CHANG, SALMAN AHMAD, RACHEL LLOYD, AND OTHERS
SPEAK OUT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND IN SUPPORT OF BREAKTHROUGH**

NEW YORK, NY – June 3 – Innovative global human rights group Breakthrough last night hosted its “Speakout” benefit at the Harold Pratt House and Peterson Hall in New York City. The event, attended by 200 guests, raised \$100,000 to support Breakthrough’s cutting-edge programs in the United States and India, which use the power of arts, media, and pop culture to advance human rights. “Without our friends and supporters, Breakthrough would not be able to continue its work of building human rights culture for all,” said Mallika Dutt, president and CEO of Breakthrough. “We are grateful to our friends old and new, and to the artists and performers who shared the gifts that make them such powerful, creative champions of dignity and justice.”

With Emmy Award-winning ABC-TV anchor **Juju Chang** serving as emcee, the evening’s presentation began with a musical performance by **Salman Ahmad**—joined by the audience—who is known as “the Bono of South Asia.” Playwright and actor **Nilaja Sun** followed with a darkly funny excerpt of her multi-character and multi-award-winning one-woman show, *No Child...*; **Rachel Lloyd**, founder of Girls Education and Mentoring Services (GEMS), then read from her harrowing and hopeful memoir, *Girls Like Us: Fighting for a World Where Girls Are Not for Sale*. **Devonte Rosero** of Magicians Without Borders, with branches in El Salvador and India, used magic as a way to tell his story of leaving gang life and making a new future appear for himself and others. Finally, **Jean Franco Vergaray** presented *Role Call*, winner of Breakthrough’s I Am This Land (www.iamthisland.org) music video contest, which he directed and edited and which schools throughout the city and country use to spark conversation about diversity. Jean Franco thanked Breakthrough for the inspiration to create the video, which, he said, “has started conversations that on a regular day would not have been started.” (More performer quotes below.)

Distinguished director and **Mira Nair** (*Mississippi Masala*, *Monsoon Wedding*) also took the stage



to help auction a walk-on role in her upcoming film, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.

Breakthrough's current and signature projects include the new, award-nominated, Facebook game for human rights, America 2049 (www.america2049.com), which reaches beyond the popular networking platform to include other social media, fictional websites, historical artifacts, real-life events, Hollywood celebrities—and a resonant message of hope for change; and the groundbreaking multiplatform campaign *Bell Bajao! (Ring the Bell!)* (www.bellbajao.org)—which calls on men and boys to stop domestic violence, and which has reached over 130 million people in India. Malika Dutt joined President Bill Clinton at the Clinton Global Initiative late last year to announce the organization's global commitment and partnership with United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Select quotes from performers:

- **Salman Ahmad:** "When you see with the heart all the masks fall down."
- **Jean Franco Vergaray:** "Having more than one identity is what makes us individuals."
- **Nilaja Sun:** "I do believe every child in this great country of ours deserves the right to an outstanding education. Every child!"
- **Devonte Rosero:** "Magic is believing the impossible. Believe in the magic of you and all will be possible."

About Breakthrough

Breakthrough (www.breakthrough.tv) is a global human rights organization that uses the power of arts, media, and pop culture to inspire people to take bold action for dignity, equality, and justice. Breakthrough mobilizes individuals and communities to stand for universal human rights by using multimedia tools that transform hearts and minds. Based in India and the United States—the world's two largest democracies—Breakthrough addresses critical global issues including violence against women, sexuality and HIV/AIDS, immigrant rights and racial justice.

For photos of the event or additional information, please contact Lynn Harris, lynn@breakthrough.tv, +1.212.868.6500.