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Rinat Akhmetov gives \$200,000 grant to director Alisa Kovalenko for the Oscar campaign of Ukrainian documentary film **Traces**



Ukrainian director Alisa Kovalenko will receive a \$200,000 grant from our shareholder [Rinat Akhmetov](#) for the international Oscar campaign of her documentary film "[Traces](#)" (Ukrainian: ?????). On 16 September 2026, Ukraine selected the film as its national entry for the 99th Academy Awards in the Best International Feature Film category. The film tells the story of Ukrainian women who survived violence and torture during russia's war against Ukraine.

What is the grant for?

The grant will help present *Traces* to the international film community at the next stages of the Oscar selection.

What is the film *Traces* about?

Traces is directed by Alisa Kovalenko with co-director Marysia Nikitiuk. The women in the film refuse to call themselves victims. Through their stories, the film speaks about human resilience, solidarity, mutual support and hope. One of the central figures is Iryna Dovhan from Donetsk, a former captive whose story became known around the world through The New York Times. Today Ms Dovhan helps other women and documents their testimonies in the liberated territories of Ukraine.

Ms Kovalenko is a human rights advocate and a member of SEMA Ukraine, an organisation of women who survived sexual violence during Russia's war. In 2019, she became the first woman in Ukraine to speak openly about her own experience of war-related sexual violence.

*"The selection of our documentary *Traces* to represent Ukraine at the 99th Academy Awards is an incredible honour and a responsibility. But above all, it is a platform to amplify the voices of women who refuse to stay silent about what they have been through, and to draw the world's attention to the crimes and torture committed by the Russian invaders," said **Ms Kovalenko**.*

Why is the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation supporting the film?

*"Rinat Akhmetov's decision to support Alisa Kovalenko and her film with a grant is personal and deliberate. Even before this, the Museum of Civilian Voices agreed a strategic partnership with the film's team, because *Traces* reflects its philosophy. It is a film about people who, after extremely severe trauma, find the strength to go on living and tell their*

*stories in their own words. The Rinat Akhmetov Foundation became the first charitable foundation in Ukraine to support the Oscar campaign for a Ukrainian film," said **Natalya Yemchenko, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer at SCM and Chair of the Supervisory Board of the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation.***

What has the film achieved so far?

Traces won the Panorama Audience Award at the 2026 Berlin International Film Festival and was named best film in the documentary competition at the Movies That Matter festival in The Hague. That win also made it eligible for consideration in a second Oscar category, Best Documentary Feature Film.

What happens next?

The shortlist of 15 films for Best International Feature Film will be announced on 15 December 2026, and the five nominees on 21 January 2027. The 99th Academy Awards ceremony will take place on 14 March 2027.