

Photojournalist Alexandra Avakian has covered many of the most important issues of her time. Her photographs have been published in *National Geographic*, *Time*, *LIFE*, the *New York Times Magazine*, and many others in the U.S. and throughout Europe.

Avakian has worked with the National Geographic Society since 1990, with such assignments as a cover story on Iran, photographic essays on Gaza, Romania, Armenia, Latvia, Lebanon's Hezbollah and American Muslims. She has been featured on National Geographic Television and on the National Geographic web site, and she has been published in National Geographic books.

Her work in Iran was chronicled in "Iran: Behind the Veil," a full-length episode of the National Geographic Television show *Explorer*. She has appeared on numerous TV shows, including a segment of CNN's *Anderson Cooper 360* on her work about Hezbollah, C-Span's *Book TV*, VOA-TV and radio, Fox Business, Al Jazeera, and more. Her photos have also been published in many National Geographic books, including *Women Photographers at National Geographic*, *Through the Lens*, *Wide Angle*, and *The World of Islam*. She has also produced the photographs for three books at Clarkson Potter/Crown Books and has been published in several Time Life books, as well as others. Avakian has received honors from Pictures of the Year International, the New York Foundation for the Arts, and *American Photographer*, and has exhibited in New York, Europe, China and three times at the International Photojournalism Festival Visa Pour L'Image in Perpignan, France, including in 2009.

Avakian's photographic and written memoir, *Windows of the Soul: My Journeys in the Muslim World*, was published by Focal Point/National Geographic in fall 2008. Her book has been featured by [O, the Oprah Magazine](#); [Time.com](#); NPR.com's [Picture Show](#); [New York Times Lens](#), and Voice of America radio and TV in several languages, among others.

In the book's foreword, John M. Fahey, Jr., president and CEO of the National Geographic Society, writes: "The photographs she brought to us were striking for their directness, their chaotic authenticity, and their human feeling. Perhaps most impressive of all to me was the fact that Alex was obviously willing to face enormous danger to get these great pictures. ... Alex is a true humanitarian; her photographs are driven by great passion and a great heart. With courage and sensitivity she offers a rare insight into unfamiliar cultures and societies. Her inspired photography ... bears witness not only to pain but also to beauty and joy."

Avakian covered the Soviet Union, its fall, and the aftermath, including several civil wars, uprisings, and the 1991 coup for *Time* magazine and others. Avakian also covered the first Palestinian Intifada for seven years and many other stories in the Middle East, Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Caribbean for the major magazines of her time. She spent seven months covering Haiti in 1986-87. She documented the civil war and famine in Somalia and Sudan for *Time*. Her subjects have also included the 1988 earthquake in Armenia, the fall of the Berlin Wall, Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution for *LIFE* magazine, the funeral of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989 for *Time*, homelessness and drug addiction in New York, and the migration of raptors through Mexico for *Audubon*, etc. Avakian lived in Moscow for two years (1990-92), Somalia for six months (1992-93), and Gaza for two years (1993-95).

Avakian continues to shoot stories worldwide, such as her recent photo essay for *ELLE* magazine in Bosnia, as well as give slide lectures, do book signings, and teach workshops, as she has recently has at the International Center of Photography, Columbia University's Davis Auditorium, Florida International University's Marc International Pavilion, the Miami Book Fair, University of Arizona's Center for Middle Eastern Studies and journalism school (JSAC), the Tucson Book Festival, George Mason University's Fall for the Book Festival, the Middle East Institute, *National Geographic Live*, and many more. She is currently at work on several projects.

In 1983 Avakian graduated from Sarah Lawrence College with a B.A. in liberal arts. She also studied at the International Center of Photography and the New School. She has been a photojournalist since 1984. Avakian has been a senior member of the distinguished photo agency Contact Press Images since 1991. She lives with her husband and son in the Washington, D.C. area.