

Freedom Fighter

When filmmaker Chris Yates met with Majed El Shafie, he initially intended to just help make a promotional video for the former Egyptian Muslim's campaign against religious persecution. But as he followed El Shafie on missions to Pakistan and Afghanistan, he realized that the work needed a wider audience.

The result is *Freedom Fighter*, an 85-minute documentary that recounts El Shafie's one-man crusade to help those victimized for their faith—from Muslims in China and members of the country's Falun Gong movement to Christians in the Middle East.

Filmed over a four-year period, the documentary includes the harrowing account of a 2-year-old girl raped by a Muslim man trying to force the child's family to convert from Christianity. Shafie—himself imprisoned, tortured and sentenced to death for accepting Christ, before a dramatic escape to Israel—managed to win the family freedom to the West.

Yates, who worked in Christian television in Canada before starting his own One Media studio, put himself in danger to capture El Shafie's work. The pair came under gunfire on one trip and Yates had a tense encounter with members of the Taliban in Kabul.

Though El Shafie—now an ordained minister whose One Free World International human rights organization is based in Canada—focuses his efforts on fellow believers, “he feels strongly that Jesus would want to help everyone,” said Yates. “So when he comes across other religious minorities that are being persecuted he thinks the best witness is to show them love and compassion as well.” *Freedom Fighter* was released in April.