

## Dalai Lama cut from AIDS documentary for Chinese public

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(Reuters) The Chinese government has agreed to let state television air an acclaimed foreign documentary on AIDS after an interview with the Dalai Lama was removed, according to the film's American director. After two years of negotiations and with the blessings of the Chinese Health Ministry, CCTV will air an abridged version of "A Closer Walk", a documentary featuring interviews with AIDS patients, doctors, activists and world leaders, to coincide with World AIDS Day. Two 30-minute segments, featuring an interview with Chinese Vice-Health Minister Wang Longde but minus two terse soundbites by the Dalai Lama on the importance of human compassion, are to be shown on CCTV channel 10. *"I felt that the point that the Dalai Lama made in the film is made in many places by many people"*, director Robert Bilheimer told Reuters when asked why he had bowed to censorship demands. *"And I felt that the advantage of bringing the film's message of dignity, compassion and hope and helping the Chinese people contextualise the global AIDS epidemic far outweighed sticking to my guns on that issue and not showing the film here at all"*.

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