



Martin Ennals Award 2022

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NEWS RELEASE

Three inspiring leaders of the human rights movement, Laureates of the 2022 Martin Ennals Award

Geneva, Wednesday, January 19, 2022 – Three driving forces of the human rights movement are the Laureates of the 2022 Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders. In Vietnam, Pham Doan Trang, a prominent journalist, fought for freedom of speech and civil rights before being convicted to nine years in prison. In Burkina Faso, Dr. Daouda Diallo fearlessly documents human rights abuses committed in the wake of widespread violence between armed forces and Islamist insurgents fighting for control over his country. In Bahrain, Abdul-Hadi Al-Khawaja ignited the quest for democratic and social reform and has sustained his dedication to human rights during ten long years in prison. The three Martin Ennals Award Laureates inspired many more to commit themselves to protect human rights. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Award Ceremony is postponed until June, 2nd 2022. The Martin Ennals Foundation, the Jury and the City of Geneva will meanwhile support the Laureates and celebrate their courage through other actions.

Celebrating three galvanizers of the human rights movement

Each year, the Martin Ennals Award provides recognition and protection to human rights defenders who strive for freedom, justice, equality and accountability in their communities and countries, often at the risk of their own lives. Human rights activists work tirelessly across the globe. Some of them bring such passion and charisma to their causes that they inspire others, thus mobilising the future generation of the movement. These exceptional activists are the ones nominated to the Martin Ennals Award. *"In 2022, the Jury nominated three galvanizers of the human rights movement; courage is the connecting dot between them."*, said **Hans Thoolen**, Chair of the Martin Ennals Award Jury.

The 2022 Laureates

- **Pham Doan Trang** is a leading journalist, editor and democracy advocate in Vietnam, where the Communist Party has left little room for opposition voices to flourish. She directed several independent media outlets to raise awareness amongst Vietnam's citizens of their fundamental rights galvanising many other journalists and human rights defenders to speak up. She was one of the most hunted activists in her country before being arrested in October 2020. On 14 December 2021, Pham Doan Trang was sentenced to nine years in prison for "conducting propaganda against the state". There are growing concerns about her health.
- **Dr. Daouda Diallo** is a trained pharmacist-turned-human rights activist in Burkina Faso. The founder of the civil society coalition CISC, he dedicatedly documents human rights violations in a country rocked by violent crossfires between government forces, local paramilitary groups and Islamist factions. He carries the torch for justice and accountability to victims of the violence and their families. Dr. Diallo's message of unity amongst different ethnic groups and faiths

provides inspiration to a country struggling with extreme poverty, hunger, and weak governance.

- **Abdul-Hadi Al-Khawaja** is a charismatic architect of Bahrain's human rights movement and a leader of the 2011 protests calling for democracy and greater freedom in the Gulf region. Al-Khawaja is not only an activist, but also a social entrepreneur who founded some of the first human rights research and defence organizations in the region, which still exist today. He inspires future generations in Bahrain to continue to fight despite his now decade-long imprisonment.

A Ceremony postponed

Held in the heart of Geneva, Switzerland, the Martin Ennals Award Ceremony gathers every year both local and international audiences for a unique celebration of human rights defenders. *"As a city of human rights, Geneva is committed to supporting international cooperation on critical issues. Throughout the pandemic, many organizations have persisted in their human rights missions, demonstrating tremendous resilience. In this spirit, we are proud to co-organise another edition of the Martin Ennals Award",* said Member of the City Executive **Alfonso Gomez**.

In 2022, the organizers chose to **postpone the Ceremony until June, 2nd 2022** instead of virtualizing it: *"The latest outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic does not allow for us to welcome the Laureates and the public in optimal conditions. Instead, we will adapt our training and advocacy activities so we can continue to support the Laureates throughout the winter."*, explained **Isabel de Sola**, Director of the Martin Ennals Foundation.

The Laureates

Pham Doan Trang (Vietnam)

"I hope that some of my writings will touch someone, help them realize the truth and maybe change how they think about society".



In Vietnam, little room remains for opposition voices in a context where the authoritarian government repeatedly stifles citizens' freedom of speech and the right to information. Pham Doan Trang, a talented journalist and editor of several leading independent media outlets, began advocating for political and civil liberties in the late 2000s. She is a primary advocate for democracy in Vietnam.

In an environment that challenges the very existence of investigative journalism, her unique entrepreneurial initiatives to establish multiple media outlets (such as the Luat Khoa and Liberal Publishing House) were inspirational to many. It galvanised several other journalists in Vietnam to speak up about human rights violations. Her persistent efforts to raise awareness amongst the population about their rights made Trang one of the most hunted human rights defenders in Vietnam, until she was eventually arrested in 2020 and remained in incommunicado detention until October 19, 2021. On December 14, 2021, she was sentenced to nine years in prison for "conducting propaganda against the state". There are growing concerns about her health.

Jury statements about Pham Doan Trang

"Pham Doan Trang has been a galvaniser for many other activists and journalists in Vietnam where freedom of expression is considered a threat", said **Phil Robertson**, Deputy Asia Director at Human Rights Watch.

"Pham Doan Trang's work is not only needed, but also legitimate, it is essential. She should be freed immediately and unconditionally", said **Friedhelm Weinberg**, Executive Director at HURIDOCS.

Dr. Daouda Diallo (Burkina Faso)

"We have documented more than 1000 killings of Burkinabe civilians in the context of the armed conflict".



In Burkina Faso, Dr. Daouda Diallo is a **pharmacist** by training and a **committed human rights defender**. Since 2019, Dr. Diallo strives to document human rights violations by **government forces** and **Islamist factions**, as well as by local militias formed to defend villages caught in the crossfire. His work occurs against the backdrop of extreme poverty and weak governance, which make Burkina Faso one of the most fragile states worldwide.

He oversees the medical laboratory of **The Centre Hospitalier Régional Dédougou**. Since 2019, he is also the founder and Secretary General of the **Collectif Contre l'impunité et la Stigmatisation des Communautés** (CISC - Collective Against Impunity and Stigmatisation of Communities), an organization conducting numerous investigations and reporting on the conflict. Dr. Diallo has been a **reliable news source** for international organizations and media channels; he is also **highly trusted and revered** by victims of the violence, given his **empathetic and kind** manners; by international actors, for his **analysis and information** on abuses; and by NGO workers, who see him as a leader willing to give voice to their calls for justice. One of CISC's objective is also to restore **social cohesion** among the varying ethnic groups of Burkina Faso who, in the chaos sown by the violence, have at times turned on each other.

He has been the **subject of numerous threats**, ranging from stalking, robbery, to serious death threats. Most notably in connection with his public statements and advocacy regarding the massacre in Yirgou in January 2019, following violent clashes between Islamist groups, the local paramilitary and Burkinabe government militias. Despite working in such vulnerable conditions, Dr. Diallo remains committed to the protection of human rights in Burkina Faso and inspires many others to join the movement.

Jury statements about Dr. Diallo

"Dr. Diallo challenges the rampant impunity for human rights abuses committed by Islamist groups, state security forces, and paramilitary groups while facing threats from all of them", said **Silke Pfeiffer**, Jury Member and Head of the Human Rights and Peace Department at Bread for the World.

"Dr. Diallo is one of the most committed, active and collegial human rights defenders I have encountered in my 20 years at Human Rights Watch. He is fearless and his courage has been contagious", said **Corinne Dufka**, West Africa Director at Human Rights Watch.

Abdul-Hadi Al-Khawaja (Bahrain)

"The Bahraini people should continue on the path of peaceful resistance."



Bahraini-Danish activist Abdul-Hadi Al-Khawaja is one of the earliest architects of the human rights movement in Bahrain and a leader of the movement for greater freedom and democracy in the Gulf region. His dedication to the protection of human rights emerged early on. Fiercely outspoken, he embodies Bahrain's **spirit of protest** and **inspires a new generation** of activists.

After receiving asylum in Denmark with his family, he continued his activism by documenting human rights violations in Bahrain and advocating on behalf of victims and survivors up to the United Nations. Following his return to Bahrain in 2001, he advocated for economic equity and an end to corruption and criticized the regime for a series of human rights abuses and for inciting discrimination between the Shia majority and Sunni minority.

Al-Khawaja co-founded with other Bahraini and regional human rights defenders several prominent human rights organisations such as the **Bahrain Centre for Human Rights** and the **Gulf Centre for Human Rights**. These organisations were the first of their kind in the region, igniting a powerful culture of resistance against authoritarian regimes. He expanded his work internationally as well.

During the Bahrain chapter of what is known as the **"Arab Spring"** uprisings, Al-Khawaja led several peaceful demonstrations and pledged allegiance to the emerging drive for securing democratic reforms across the MENA region. Bahrain's monarchy retaliated: in April 2011, Al-Khawaja was severely beaten, forcibly disappeared and tortured. Two months later, he was **condemned to life in prison** in a military trial.

April 2021 marked Abdul-Hadi Al-Khawaja's tenth year in prison and his sixtieth birthday. In prison, he organised multiple **hunger strikes** to secure rights of detainees. There are **urgent concerns about his physical security in prison**.

Jury statements about Abdul-Hadi Al-Khawaja

"Abdul-Hadi Al-Khawaja was detained and handed a life sentence for organising peaceful protests, urging authorities to respect human rights in Bahrain. His determination, courage and resilience are moving", said Jury member **Guadalupe Marengo**, Head of Global Human Rights Defenders Programme at Amnesty International.

"Abdul-Hadi Al-Khawaja is a man of commitment, integrity, and determination. One of the kindest persons I have ever met. He was a colleague and a friend I could rely on. His arrest and torture triggered an outpouring of love and solidarity from across the Middle East and North Africa", shared **Andrew Anderson**, Executive Director of Front Line Defenders.

THE JURY

Who is the Jury?

The independent Jury of the Martin Ennals Award is made up of representatives of ten of the world's leading human rights organizations.



AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



Brot
für die Welt



ISHR | INTERNATIONAL SERVICE
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

OMCT
SOS-Torture Network

fi FRONT LINE
DEFENDERS

human rights *first*



huridocs

The Regional Panel

In addition to Jury members, a Regional Panel composed of a diverse group of human rights organizations, assist in providing expertise on the various geographic contexts in which MEA nominees work:

Cairo Institute for Human Rights
Euro-Mediterranean Network for Human Rights
African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies
East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project
Forum – Asia
Asian Human Rights Commission
Civil Rights Defenders

Jury statements about the Martin Ennals Award

Hans Thoolen, Chair of the Jury says: *"I am proud to be chairing the Martin Ennals Award Jury. Each year, the Award offers publicity, recognition and encouragement to three Defenders, but more so it gathers the international human rights movement around the protection of all human rights defenders."*

Phil Lynch, Director of ISHR says: *"As a Jury member it is both humbling and inspiring to engage with the Laureates, or with their families and representatives in circumstances where the Defender is detained, disappeared or unable to travel. They represent and bring out the best in humanity."*

THE MARTIN ENNALS AWARD - FAQs

What is the Martin Ennals Award?

The Martin Ennals Award, managed by the Martin Ennals Foundation, recognizes Human Rights Defenders each year from around the world who distinguish themselves through their exceptional commitment to human rights - often at the risk of their own lives. Since its creation in 1992, the Award has honored more than 60 Human Rights Defenders from over 35 countries.

Who receives the Award?

The Martin Ennals Award honors persons or organizations who defend and promote human rights, in their personal capacity or collectively. Past Laureates include lawyers, bloggers, civil society activists and even a Buddhist monk.

What is the aim of the Award?

The Award is given to Human Rights Defenders in urgent need of protection – for example, who are in jail or threatened with imprisonment, who are harassed while doing their job or have gone missing. The Award seeks to protect these Defenders by mobilizing international support for them and highlighting their contributions in the media. The presentation of the Award is accompanied by support for advocacy and outreach activities, as well as capacity-building and prize money.

What are the criteria on which the Jury bases its decision?

The Jury considers the contributions made by Human Rights Defenders in their contexts, as well as their courage, determination and commitment despite the threats and harassment they may face. The Jury also considers their commitment to non-violent means.

Who are the members of the Jury?

The Jury is made up of representatives of ten of the world's leading human rights organizations. They are: Amnesty International, Bread for the World, the International Commission of Jurists, the International Federation for Human Rights, Front Line Defenders, Human Rights First, Human Rights Watch, Human Rights Information and Documentation Systems, the World Organization against Torture and the International Service for Human Rights. In order to reflect the cultural and geographic diversity of the human rights movement, a network of regional human rights organizations consults on the selection process.

What do the Laureates receive?

The Laureates receive each between 20,000-30,000 Swiss francs. However, the importance of this Award to Human Rights Defenders is not restricted to its financial aspect. The international recognition and credibility of the Martin Ennals Award contributes to their protection, as does the support of prominent figures such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Jury members, elected officials of the City of Geneva, additional donors, and other partner organizations. The Martin Ennals Foundation offers Laureates a gamut of activities to strengthen their networks, reach new audiences and hone important skills.

Who finances the Martin Ennals Award?

The Award is actively supported by the City of Geneva, who co-hosts the Ceremony and allocates funds to the three Laureates. Our donors include the Republic and Canton of Geneva, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Irish Aid, the Norwegian Human Rights Fund, Bread for the World, the Loterie Romande, Protectdefenders.eu, Heinrich Böll Foundation, the Oak Foundation, the Foundation Pluralisme and the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy. In addition, various private and institutional donors contribute to the Martin Ennals Foundation's activities.

Who was Martin Ennals?

Martin Ennals was a British human rights activist and social entrepreneur. He was Secretary General of Amnesty International from 1968 to 1980. During his tenure, the organization was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, the Erasmus Prize and the United Nations Human Rights Prize. Martin Ennals also contributed to the creation of several other non-governmental organizations: ARTICLE19, International Alert and HURIDOCS. The Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders was created in 1992. The Award was officially launched in June 1993 at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna.

What is the role of the City of Geneva?

The City of Geneva is a key partner to the Martin Ennals Award since 2005. Through the Délégation Genève Ville Solidaire, the City of Geneva supports activities to advance human rights in Switzerland and throughout the world. The partnership with Martin Ennals Award forms part of the City's policy of fostering International Geneva, bringing the latter closer to local Geneva, and its policy of international solidarity. As co-host to the Award event since 2008, the City of Geneva provides funding to the Ceremony and an annual grant to support the work of the three Laureates.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

The Laureates announcement

The identity of the three Martin Ennals Award Laureates will be revealed during an online press conference on Wednesday, 19 January 2022 at 11 am CET, broadcast from the Martin Ennals Foundation website: www.martinennalsaward.org

The Award Ceremony

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Award Ceremony is postponed until **June, 2nd 2022**. More information about the venue and the format will be available later this spring.

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