



Narrative Report 2019

30 MARCH 2020

Martin Ennals Foundation



MARTIN ENNALS AWARD
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

About Us

The Martin Ennals Award and Foundation

The Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders is an annual prize for human rights defenders who are at risk. Finalists to the Award and the Laureate are selected by a Jury of ten of the world's leading human rights NGOs. Since its inception in 1992, the Award has recognized over 60 human rights defenders from more than 20 countries around the world.

The Martin Ennals Foundation is based in Geneva, Switzerland. Our role is to manage the Award cycle and support the Finalists and Laureates.

The Jury

The Martin Ennals Award is a unique collaboration among ten of the world's leading human rights organizations:



Narrative report 2019

Message from our new Director, Isabel de Sola

2019 was a year of important transitions for the Martin Ennals Foundation.

In April 2019, the Foundation Board approved a new strategic direction which reinforced our previous objectives and introduced several important new elements with the aim of increasing the Foundation's impact in three ways: first, by developing more structural engagement with past laureates and finalists, many of whom continue to work for human rights in adverse circumstances and at great personal risk; second, by building greater visibility and support in Switzerland and especially in Geneva; and third, by improving communications and collaborating more closely with the ten jury organizations.

"I spent six years of my life in a detention centre under inhumane and unspeakable conditions. We were denied our fundamental rights, and were abused and tortured every day. The Martin Ennals Award helped set me free and gave me a platform to share my story and fight for refugee rights."

2019 Laureate, Abdul Aziz Muhamat

Three members of our Board retired from their positions with four new members joining by end of the year. The long-time Director of the Foundation, Michael Khambatta, departed from his post at the end of June 2019. Two new part-time staff were hired to manage the Foundation in the summer.

Amidst all the changes, the Martin Ennals Award cycle was successfully completed – first, with the celebration in February of the Martin Ennals Award ceremony and the announcement of Abdul Aziz Muhamat (Aziz) as our Laureate 2019. A nominations campaign for the 2020 Award was launched in the spring of 2019, followed by the selection and presentation of the finalists 2020 in the fall. Development of two new programs for the Foundation began as well: first, a pilot 'education project' with Genevan high-school students; second, the "Geneva Residency" prototype.

We are proud that the Martin Ennals Foundation once again delivered an Award cycle with great impact for our finalists 2019 – Aziz, Erin Keskin and Marino Cordoba. And, we are encouraged by the early harvest of results from our strategic reorientation as a Foundation, the professionalization of our communication capacity, and our renewed commitment to be a dynamic player in the human rights ecosystem of Geneva and Switzerland.

We hope this report does justice to the tremendous efforts made by our staff, Jury members, our donors, and the Martin Ennals finalists themselves, to raise up the cause of human rights in 2019.

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1. Project summary and key updates

In 2018-2019 a major change was implemented in the annual cycle of the Martin Ennals Award. Following consultations with the Jury members, donors, the City of Geneva, and other stakeholders, the annual Award ceremony was brought forward by four months. Thus, the MEA moved to a cycle where finalists are announced in the fall and the Award ceremony is held early the next year.

To inaugurate the new cycle, on February 13, 2019 Abdul Aziz Muhamat, a Sudanese refugee held in the Australian offshore immigration system on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea, was selected as the Martin Ennals Award Laureate 2019. The two additional finalists 2019 were Marino Cordoba, an Afro-Colombian leader working to ensure his community's interests are included in the national peace process; and Eren Keskin, a leading human rights lawyer in Turkey fighting for freedom of speech, LGBT issues, and the end of sexual violence against women.



Abdul Aziz Muhamat and Kate Gilmore, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, enjoy a moment at the Martin Ennals Award ceremony 2019

Evolution of our Objectives

The MEA's primary objective remains to **identify, give needed protection and deserved recognition to outstanding human rights defenders, portraying them as role models and contributing to legitimising the work of human rights defenders worldwide**. In doing so, the MEA has an impact on the behaviour of governments and other actors who attack, harass or constrain human rights defenders. To achieve these goals, we provide defenders with:

- Protection through widespread publicity
- Influence through access and relationship-building with international stakeholders
- Financial support through prize money

Martin Ennals Foundation 2019



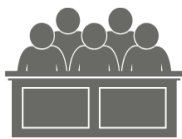
Nominations

+50



Finalists 2019 + 2020

6



Jury meetings

2



Prize money

90K



Publicity

+1.6M



Ceremony 2019
participants

+300

The new strategy agreed by the Board in spring 2019 prioritized three focus areas which would reinforce and expand on our objectives: 1) developing more structural engagement with past laureates and finalists; 2) building greater visibility and support in Switzerland and Geneva; and 3) improving communications and collaborating more closely with the ten Jury organizations.

The new executive team, hired in summer 2019, began filling out the details of the new strategy, first by developing personal and professional learning opportunities in Geneva for MEA finalists. To that end, the team worked throughout the fall 2019 to develop the “Geneva residency” programme – a two week stay in Switzerland for the purpose of conducting international advocacy and participating in learning workshops for professional and personal development. The first ‘Geneva residency’ would be implemented for the 2020 finalists.

To address the second focus area, of enhancing our presence in Geneva and Switzerland, the new team sought out opportunities for engagement with city locals – students, Genevan associations, journalists, civil society and diplomatic leaders. A second pilot project emerged from these efforts – an educational initiative in Genevan high-schools, to be delivered jointly with Amnesty International Swiss chapter and our Foundation’s long-standing film partner, True Heroes Films. Plans began for joint diplomatic activities with the federal government of Switzerland in Bern.

Lastly, the aspiration to strengthen our communication capacity was confirmed by the hiring of a Communications Manager, a full-time intern for Communications, and the installation of professional level software and systems to track our media presence. More budget was redirected to the communications function, with the certainty that improving our ability to communicate in 2019 would contribute to objectives 1 and 2, and overall strengthen the positioning of MEA as ‘the award of the international human rights community’.

The new team has begun brainstorming on how to offer more support to past finalists and laureates. Over the years, the MEF has offered support to past laureates and finalists when in need – for example, throughout 2019, the MEF intervened to raise visibility of the case of Ahmed Mansoor, the 2015 MEA laureate who serves a ten-year sentence for his work as a human rights defender in the United Arab Emirates. The ambition under the new Foundation strategy is to develop a more structural approach to working for and with past laureates throughout 2020 and beyond.

Key highlights over the first seven months of the new strategy include:

Objective 1) identify, give needed protection and deserved recognition to outstanding human rights defenders and 2) provide more support to finalists and laureates

- MEF disbursed the prizes to finalists Marino Cordoba and Eren Keskin in the first half of 2019. We are supporting the 2019 Laureate, Aziz, to assist him in managing the financial prize.
- After his win, Aziz decided to apply for asylum in Switzerland, knowing that if he returned to Manus Island detention centre, he would forfeit his human rights entirely and return essentially to prison life. Aziz was granted asylum-seeker status in the spring 2019 and currently resides in Geneva, where he is a full-time student of international affairs and a sought-after speaker.

- [Protective publicity strategies](#): After the three finalists for the Martin Ennals Award 2019 were selected in September 2018, we worked with them to develop a map of key media in their countries and/or regions. We collaborated with our press contacts to build wider international publicity for them. We commissioned three film portraits and other key images which were successfully delivered in time for the 2019 Award ceremony.
- We celebrated the Award ceremony on 13 February 2019 with the presence of 300 members of the public, leaders from local and international Geneva. Important coverage of the ceremony and of the finalists was ensured at international and local levels.



MEA finalist 2019 Marino Cordoba receives a Martin Ennals recognition from Sandrine Salerno, Mayor of Geneva, during the Martin Ennals Award ceremony 2019.

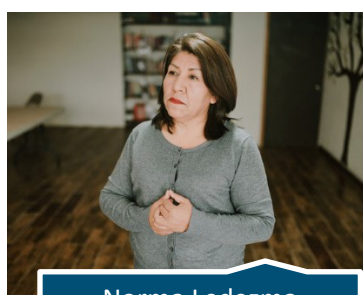
- In the spring 2019, we planned and implemented [international advocacy](#) trips (with Marino Cordoba in Brussels and Washington and with Abdul Aziz Muhamat in Switzerland) to brief officials in key capitals and build up a network of contacts and supporters.
- In light of the travel ban on Eren Keskin, several members of the Jury and our former Foundation Director travelled to Turkey in spring 2019 to give her the Martin Ennals recognition in person. A small ceremony was held at her offices in Ankara in the presence of diplomatic missions, journalists, and civil society. The ceremony was widely covered in the Turkish press.
- In October 2019, Chair of the Jury, Hans Thoolen, visited [Mohamed Zaree](#) and [Mona Seif](#), previous Laureate and finalist respectively, in Cairo. Both defenders face renewed pressure from Egyptian authorities because of their human rights. The Jury Chair took stock of their needs and collected input for how the MEA should continue its work with former laureates.

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- In late November 2019, we announced the finalists for the MEA 2020 Award with a press briefing hosted by the Correspondents Association of the United Nations (ACANU) in Geneva. A global media and digital campaign launched on 26 November 2019 to begin raising the visibility and profile of our 2020 finalists – all three of whom are women for the first time in MEA history.¹ With the theme of “exceptional women human rights defenders”, our finalists announcement gained over 200 press articles in the first two days, and a 1.6 million+ person reach through our digital media platforms.

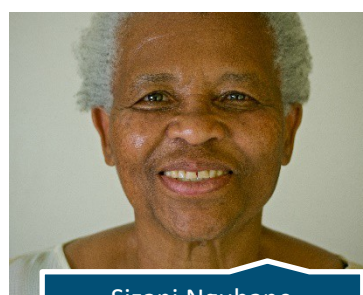
MARTIN ENNALS FINALISTS 2020



Huda al-Sarari
(Yemen)



Norma Ledezma
(Mexico)



Sizani Ngubane
(South Africa)

- The new team began putting in place the pilot project [Geneva residency 2020](#) which will offer a two-week programme for the 2020 finalists including professional and personal development and international advocacy opportunities. By close of year, more than 12 partner organizations signed on to the programme, including the Missions of Ireland and the Netherlands, Swisspeace, The Graduate Institute of Development, Geneva Academy, Pluriels, Docip, HURIDOCs, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, amongst others.

Objective 3) Enhance our presence in Geneva and Switzerland

- In the fall 2019, and after consultations with our stakeholders and the City of Geneva, it was agreed that the MEA ceremony should become more attractive to the local Genevan population and more participatory for the audience. A new concept was developed for the

¹ The 2020 finalists are: Huda al-Sarari, a Yemeni human rights lawyer who documented and exposed hundreds of cases of arbitrary detention of men and boys in southern Yemen, held in secret prisons operated by foreign allies of the official government. Norma Librada Ledezma, the founder of Justicia para Nuestras Hijas, a local organization in Chihuahua, Mexico, that accompanies families of victims of femicide and disappearances in their quest for justice. Sizani Ngubane, founder of the Rural Women's Movement in South Africa, who has dedicated her career to defending the rights of women and girls in traditional or indigenous areas of South Africa.

ceremony and a new graphic identity was commissioned to reflect the evolution of the Award.

- At the request of the Department of Public Education of the Canton of Geneva (Département de l'Instruction Publique, state-level education authority), Martin Ennals Foundation developed a pilot 'education project' to bring human rights defenders into four high school classes locally. The pilot will reach 80 students initially in 2020.

Objective 4) Strengthen our communication and collaboration with the Jury

- The MEF now has an experienced communication manager charged with transforming our ability to communicate with the world. A full-time communications intern joined the team in November. Since then, work is underway on all fronts to improve how the MEA captures audience attention and enhances visibility of our defenders:
 - The structure of our website was redone, and all content updated.
 - We are active across four social media platforms, now professionally managed by platforms such as Tweetdeck, Keyhole, Facebook analytics, and Hootsuite.
 - The archive of film footage of MEA finalists and laureates was cleaned up on YouTube and reorganized for better user experience.
 - A new livestream provider was hired for the 2020 ceremony.
- Nominations: In the spring and summer 2019, the Foundation renewed the Award cycle with the launch of the nominations process 2020 and subsequent voting by the Jury to establish the top ten candidates. From there, Jury members conducted due diligence and produced reports on the top nominees.
- Jury: In September 2019, the Jury held a full-day meeting in Geneva to select the three finalists to MEA 2020. The Jury deliberated on several items including the structure of reports, diversity of nominees, and other issues related to the high standard of quality for the Award.

2. Evaluation of our Outcomes and Impact

This section follows the MEF – Narrative Report 2019 – Annex - Outcomes and Indicators, attached separately.

[1 Reactions by host government indicating successful pressure](#)

[2 Easing constraints on the Finalists](#)

[3 Pressure is created on government authorities and the public is educated through media coverage of the Finalists](#)

To evaluate the outcomes and impact achieved by the Foundation's work, we take a case-by-case approach to establish how the Martin Ennals Award changed conditions – if at all – for the finalists and their causes. Primarily, we track 1) Reactions by host governments, 2) Easing of constraints on the finalists, and 3) Pressure created on governments and public awareness.² We complement this analysis by gathering feedback from finalists, for a qualitative assessment of our impact.



[Marino Cordoba – Baseline](#)

Marino Cordoba is an Afro-Colombian leader working to ensure a role for ethnic communities in the Colombian peace agreement, notably as a member of the “Ethnic Commission for Peace and the Defence of Territorial Rights” that provides input as the peace agreement is implemented. Following physical attacks and threats due to his human rights work, Cordoba received asylum in the USA in 2002. He returned to Colombia in 2012 and is now one of the principal Afro-Colombian community voices. He regularly receives death threats. While in Colombia, he is under constant armed guard.

[Marino Cordoba – MEA Impact](#)

The publicity of the MEA finalist announcement raised Cordoba's profile nationally. This publicity and international access were leveraged by Cordoba to highlight two main issues: (1) the ongoing killings of human rights defenders in Colombia, and (2) the threats to the Afro-Colombian community when driven off their land in rural areas. Cordoba's selection as a finalist was clearly taken seriously by the government. In November 2018, Cordoba attended the Paris Peace Forum, and met the newly elected Colombian President, Ivan Duque. Although the meeting was unplanned, President Duque spontaneously congratulated him on the Award. Cordoba raised the issue of recent internal displacement, whereby the security forces had blocked the IDP's movement towards Bogota.

² Outcomes 1 and 2 are the most important determinants of success for the Martin Ennals Award. They are inextricably linked and will be reported on together. Outcomes 3-6 are largely steppingstones to 1-2.

President Duque offered to follow up and meet with Cordoba in Colombia. Furthermore, a visit to Brussels in Spring 2019 allowed him to begin developing a network in Europe. His visit to Washington in early summer allowed him to deepen his network there.

[Eren Keskin – Baseline](#)



Eren Keskin is a lawyer and human rights activist in Turkey. For more than thirty years, she has struggled for fundamental rights and freedoms in her country, especially for the Kurdish community, women and the LGBTI+ community. Within the context of the worsening human rights situation in Turkey, Keskin has been the focus of intimidation attempts. As part of a solidarity campaign to support the Özgür Gündem newspaper, Keskin held the title of “editor-in-chief” of the newspaper from 2013 to 2016, when it was closed by the authorities. On 30 March 2018, she was convicted and sentenced to 12.5 years in jail for having published articles deemed to have “degraded” the Turkish nation and “insulted” the Turkish president. She is currently free while the case is appealed.

[Eren Keskin – MEA Impact](#)

Following the MEA finalist announcement, there was widespread coverage in Turkey of Keskin’s nomination. Keskin believes that the publicity means there will be a higher price for the Turkish government if they convict her. After she was selected as a finalist, two of the travel bans were lifted. However, at the close of 2019, Keskin remains unable to travel as the last travel ban remains in place. She nevertheless feels the international attention has had a positive impact on her situation.

[Abdul Aziz Muhamat – Baseline](#)

At the time of his MEA nomination, Abdul Aziz Muhamat (Aziz), from Sudan, was a compelling and tireless advocate for refugee rights – despite his condition in detention at an Australian immigration center. Seeking asylum, he was held on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea since October 2013, when his boat was intercepted by the Australian authorities. Along the way, Aziz saw friends die. He was shot at by local police. He was sent to a local prison for refusing to eat in protest at the cruelty and suffering being inflicted on others. Aziz was one of the primary voices among the men held on Manus Island. Despite the isolated location, he exposed the harsh conditions there through podcasts and media interviews. He paid a price for this as he was seen as a “ringleader” by both the PNG and Australian authorities.



[Abdul Aziz Muhamat – MEA Impact](#)

Aziz confirms that the MEA finalist announcement highlighted the cruelty of the Australian offshore immigration policy in the Australian press. While there had been significant attention previously, the MEA coverage introduced the human cost of these policies in a way not seen before. After his win in February 2019, Aziz was received by the Australian Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva. In spring 2019, MEF assisted Aziz to begin his application for

asylum in Switzerland. Aziz was successful in his application, and now resides in Geneva. Currently, he is adjusting to life in Geneva and is a sought-after speaker for the rights of migrants, participating in workshops at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, at the Graduate Institute of Geneva, at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and at the invitation of several diplomatic missions. He completed a Human rights defender training course in the summer 2019 with the ISHR and has enrolled as a masters' level student of international relations at the University of Geneva.

[Protective Publicity](#)

A primary tenet of the Foundation is that extensive media coverage and awareness raising about the defenders and their causes contribute to their protection and outcomes 1-2. We call it [protective publicity](#): more visibility and connections at international levels for a defender can raise the costs of harming them for opposing governments, organizations or other non-state actors.

[MEA 2019 media coverage](#)

After the three finalists were selected in September 2018, we worked with them to develop a map of key media in their countries and/or regions. We collaborated with our press contacts to build wider international publicity on their behalf. To enhance the available content on the finalists, MEF commissioned three film portraits, three shorter films for social media distribution and other key images for the 2019 Award ceremony and online communication campaign. A press briefing was held in November 2018 at the ACANU in Geneva to present the 2019 finalists.

Our efforts resulted in significant media coverage in each of the three countries concerned.³ From the announcement of the finalists in October 2018, 40 articles were published in a variety of mediums, including the BBC or La Liberté, and regional press such as SBS.au, El Colombiano, Gazette Duva in Turkey.⁴

³ In Turkey a portion of the press is government controlled and thus provided little coverage. However, there is still sufficient independent press as well as Turkish diaspora sources that provide independent coverage. Colombia has a free press with a wide spectrum of views. Muhamat Abdul Aziz received much coverage in the Australian, international and Swiss press.

⁴ See media Reference Annex for finalists announcement 2018.

WHAT IS PROTECTIVE PUBLICITY?

Results 2019



MEDIA COVERAGE

The announcement of the Finalists 2019 generated **40 mentions** in the printed media. The announcement of the Finalists 2020 generated over **200 mentions**.



SOCIAL MEDIA

The announcement of the Finalists 2020 achieved an **online reach of 568K and 658K impressions**. We gained 1,400 new followers on Facebook, 24 new followers on Twitter.



LIVESTREAM OF THE CEREMONY

The livestream and online video of the ceremony allow for hundreds or thousands of viewers around the world to tune in. In 2019, hundreds of **viewers joined us live and 200+ followed** on YouTube.



FILM PORTRAITS

A film portrait of **each finalist** is commissioned by the Foundation, and premieres at the Award Ceremony. The films 2019 have been viewed **several hundred times** on our YouTube channel.



KEEPING VISIBILITY ON DEFENDERS

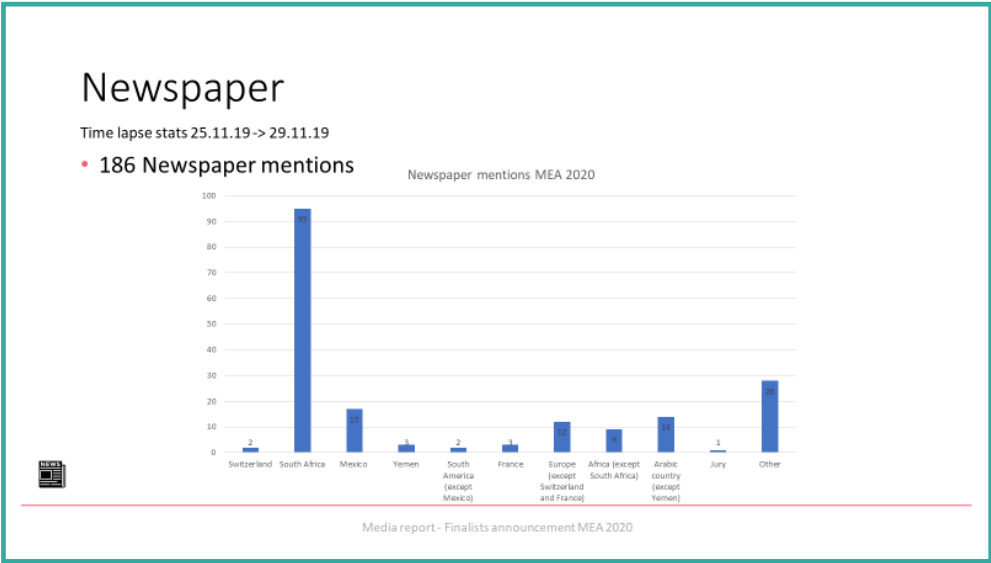
Several Martin Ennals defenders are in detention or have disappeared. We use our communication platforms to keep up awareness of those cases, such as **Ahmed Mansoor (2015) and Nasrin Zaitouneh (2012)**.

WWW.MARTINENNALEAWARD.ORG
@MARTINENNALE

All three finalists noted that the coverage at home lifted their profiles and/or the issues they worked on. Cordoba noted that while he was well known within the Afro-Colombian community, the coverage of his selection raised his profile nationally. Furthermore, it highlighted the issue of the killing of community leaders/HRDs. Aziz noted that the coverage of MEA in Australia allowed for a perspective of the human cost in a unique manner.⁵ During the days surrounding the announcement, the issue was widely reported in the news for other reasons as well. The PNG supreme court rejected a case by the refugees, and there were numerous issues around medical evacuation and treatment that attracted Australian attention. Keskin believes the international attention from the MEA protected her during the inherently political trial against her in 2019. Keskin also noted that the coverage in Turkish was mainly positive despite government control of much of the media.

MEA 2020 cycle launch

In late November 2019, we announced the finalists for the MEA 2020 Award with a press briefing hosted by the Correspondents Association of the United Nations (ACANU) in Geneva, and a global media and digital campaign.



By the close of the month of December, our finalists announcement campaign had resulted in over 1.6 million impressions on digital media; as well as over 200 articles on the 2020 finalists in local and regional newspapers of their countries, and in international press such as Reuters and the BBC. Please refer to the annex “Media Report: Finalists Announcement 2020”, attached to this report for more information.

⁵ While the number of media references is limited, much of the coverage Aziz refers to was on TV or radio, which is harder to document. Journalists cannot access Manus Island so the media coverage tends towards radio and TV.

Social Media impact #martinennals

The announcement of the Finalists in November 2019 reached a large audience online.

568,497
REACH

657,680
IMPRESSIONS

#

Media report - Finalists announcement MEA 2020

Coverage of past finalists/laureates

In 2019, the previous laureate most at risk and attracting the most media coverage was Ahmed Mansoor from the UAE. Having been detained before for his work as a human rights activist, he was arrested again in March 2017 and sentenced to ten years imprisonment in March 2018. The sentence attracted widespread media coverage, much which noted he was the 2015 MEA laureate.⁶ In July 2019, the MEF was a speaker at a side event for Ahmed Mansoor at the UN Palais des Nations, hosted by several human rights organizations, including the Gulf Human Rights Center. In October 2019, the MEF participated in a coordinated campaign amongst 50+ organizations calling for Mansoor's release on his 50th birthday. Despite the international attention, Mansoor remains in jail.

Mohamed Zaree and Mona Seif, previous Laureate and finalist respectively, face renewed pressure from Egyptian authorities regarding their human rights work. Nevertheless, Zaree has featured in the Egyptian press regularly regarding his defence of human rights. The Foundation supported both with some digital interventions in the fall of 2019.⁷

⁶ MEF contributed to the following coverage of Ahmed Mansoor's case: May 2018

https://www.google.com/search?q=Ahmed+mansoor+%22Martin+Ennals%22&safe=strict&hl=en&tbs=cdr:1,cd_min:5/25/2018,cd_max:6/4/2018&source=lnms&tbn=wns&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewj70_nLs6zhAhUlwsQBHSE-CtgQ_AUIDygC&biw=1920&bih=935

December 2018 :

https://www.google.com/search?safe=strict&hl=en&biw=1920&bih=935&tbs=cdr%3A1%2Ccd_min%3A12%2F20%2F2018%2Ccd_max%3A1%2F9%2F2019&tbn=wns&ei=47WgXKz1JfqAk74PhvWaqAE&q=Ahmed+mansoor+%22Martin+Ennals%22&oq=Ahmed+mansoor+%22Martin+Ennals%22&gs_l=psy-ab.3...8551.8551.0.11826.1.1.0.0.0.58.58.1.1.0...0...1c.1.64.psy-ab..0.0.0.....0.3oAgQ_bfWqA

⁷ MEF contributed to media coverage of our Egyptian finalists as follows:

https://www.google.com/search?q=%22Martin+Ennals%22+Zaree&safe=strict&hl=en&tbs=cdr:1,cd_min:1/1/2018,cd_max:12/31/2018&ei=xbKgXlf3FuGlmwX56rPYAg&start=10&sa=N&ved=0ahUKewjH7dD-sKzhAhXh0qYKHxN1DCsQ8NMDClcB&biw=1920&bih=935

[4 Provide access to international decision-makers and policy experts](#)

Complementary to protective publicity are the inroads to human rights policymakers and leaders at the international level. The Martin Ennals Foundation therefore seeks to open doors for its finalists in international capitals, so they can expand and deepen the networks of influential persons with whom they can lobby for their causes.

Due to multiple travel bans, Eren Keskin was not allowed to leave Turkey in 2018 (and remains banned in December 2019 at the time of writing). Abdul Aziz Muhamat was only allowed to travel to Switzerland for the ceremony in February 2019. Therefore, advocacy assistance focused primarily on Marino Cordoba.

[Marino Cordoba](#)

Advocacy visits were made to Brussels in November and to Washington in December 2018 taking advantage of Cordoba's already scheduled trips. During the first trip to Brussels, Cordoba was received by the COHOM (committee of EU members state representatives working on Human Rights) with significant interest. He further met with senior officials at the EU External Action Service of the European Commission, and with staff at the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights. In Washington, Cordoba met with senior State Department officials and staff of key senators. He also participated in a dialogue at the US Institute of Peace along with Colombian senators from across the political spectrum.

[5 Providing meaningful financial support](#)

The MEA offers important financial support to finalists – with 50,000 CHF awarded to the Laureate, and 20,000 CHF to each additional finalist.⁸ In addition, the Foundation covers all expenses in connection with the selection and award processes and the related advocacy, which in 2019 amounted to 10,000 CHF additionally for Aziz and Marino in their advocacy trips.

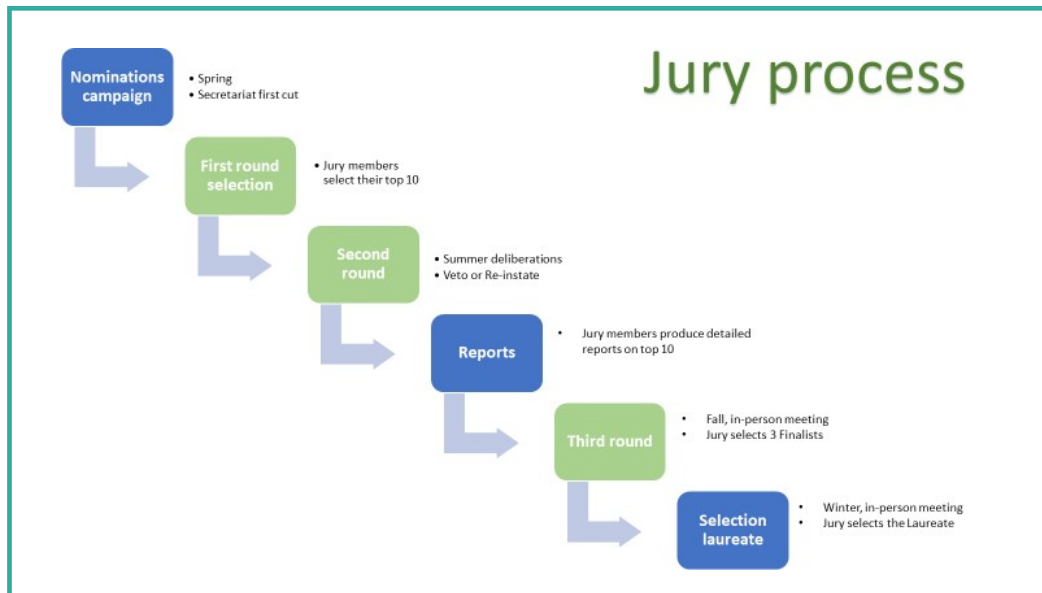
[6 Strong engagement of the Jury, Regional Panel and City of Geneva](#)

[MEA Jury](#)

One of the features that makes the Martin Ennals Award uniquely powerful is the nominations and selection process, which are conducted by an independent Jury composed of 10 of the leading international NGOs for human rights: *Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Human Rights First, International Federation of Human Rights, Front Line Defenders, the International Commission of Jurists, HURIDOCS, Brot Für die Welt, World Organization Against Torture, and International Service for Human Rights.*

⁸ What was once approximately 10,000 CHF in project funding formerly provided to all finalists has been essentially converted into prize money in 2019.

In the spring 2019, the MEF launched the new Award cycle with the start of the nomination process. Working through the Regional Panel, through our contacts abroad and the Jury member organizations, MEF collected approximately 50 nominations for the MEA 2020.



From May – August 2019, the Jury member organizations produced 10 due-diligence reports on the top nominees for the Award. The reports require Jury organizations to conduct their own research and to call upon 3 regional organizations in the field to corroborate information on Martin Ennals nominees. In September 2019, the Jury held a full-day meeting in Geneva to select three finalists to MEA 2020. Parallel to the discussion on nominees, the Jury deliberated on its own working methods, considering several items such as the diversity of the pool of nominations, rigor, the quality of due diligence reports and other issues related to ensuring the high standards of quality for the Award.

Some jury members participated in the media outreach 2018-2019 notably by issuing dedicated press releases. As discussed above, they are an integral part of international advocacy efforts.

[Regional Panel](#)

For the 2019 nominations cycle, the MEF once again recurred to the support of its Regional Panel, a volunteer network of NGOs based at grass-roots level which was first established to advise the Jury on their selection. Regional panel members publicise the nomination announcement and make their own nominations to the prize. Their views are included in the research conducted on the top ten nominations, from which the three finalists are selected. Due to lack of resources, some Regional panel members are more engaged than others.

[City of Geneva](#)

The City of Geneva (Ville de Genève) and the Martin Ennals Foundation renewed their strong partnership with a multi-year agreement “*Convention pour la remise du Prix Martin Ennals 2018 - 2022 en Ville de Genève*”. As co-hosts of the ceremony, the City of Geneva manages the invitations,

security, interpretation, the reception, and other logistics. They fund a publicity campaign that reaches across the city with posters, advertisements in local newspapers and the bus/tram system. The City provides a travel grant of CHF 5'000 for each finalist to cover travel costs associated with the ceremony within a wider contribution of CHF 50'000 annually from 2019. The City also hosts the Jury meetings that select the finalist and the Laureate.

For the 2020 ceremony, the Ville de Genève partnered with a specialized public relations company to improve the quality of the Award's communication and the ceremony itself. Two workshops were conducted in this regard, at the end of September and the second week of October. These efforts resulted in the development of a new concept for the ceremony, which enhances the attractiveness of the event for local Genevans and opens the possibility of greater participation by the audience. A new graphic line was also established with a new designer to reflect this evolution.

[Education project](#)

At the request of the Department of Public Education of the Canton of Geneva (state-level education authority), Martin Ennals Foundation developed a pilot project to bring human rights defenders into high school classes locally. Working with the Swiss chapter of Amnesty International and the True Heroes Film production company, a concept for a four-part workshop experience for students was developed in the fall 2019. The pilot project will introduce human rights and defenders as a research topic for the students, exposing them additionally to the impact which film can have as a tool to defend human rights. The pilot will reach 80 students initially in January and February 2020.

The MEF was also an active participant at other activities for human rights defenders in Geneva, for example, as a speaker in the "Young Activists" programme developed by the Graduate Institute of Geneva. In support of the Brazilian indigenous activist, Ms. Hamangai Pataxo, Foundation Director Isabel de Sola participated in a closed-door roundtable with researchers and practitioners also in late December.

3. Governance and Financial Information

In 2019, three members of the Board retired from their positions with four new members joining by end of the year. The new Board members include:

- Ivana Mrdja, manager of national society and government partnerships at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
- Barbara Lochbihler, former MEP (Green party), currently member of the UN Commission of Experts on Enforced Disappearances
- Bacre Waly Ndiaye, former UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial killings and numerous other international human rights roles
- Philippe Currat, lawyer and member of the Commission des droits de l'homme de l'Ordre des avocats de Genève

The Board warmly thanked the outgoing members -- John Horekens, Shahrzad Tadjbakhsh and Hans Thoolen – for their many contributions to the Foundation over the years.

Executive team:

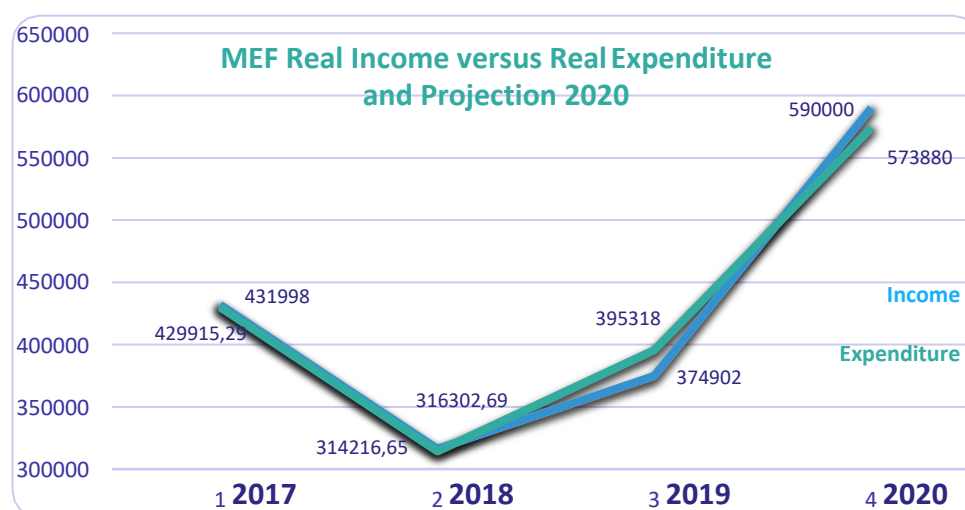
The long-time Director of the Foundation, Michael Khambatta, departed from his post at the end of June 2019. Two new part-time staff were hired to manage the Foundation, starting at end of August.

- Isabel de Sola, Director
- Chloe Bitton, Communications Manager

In addition, two interns were hired to support our incipient programme management and deliver on the communication strategy.

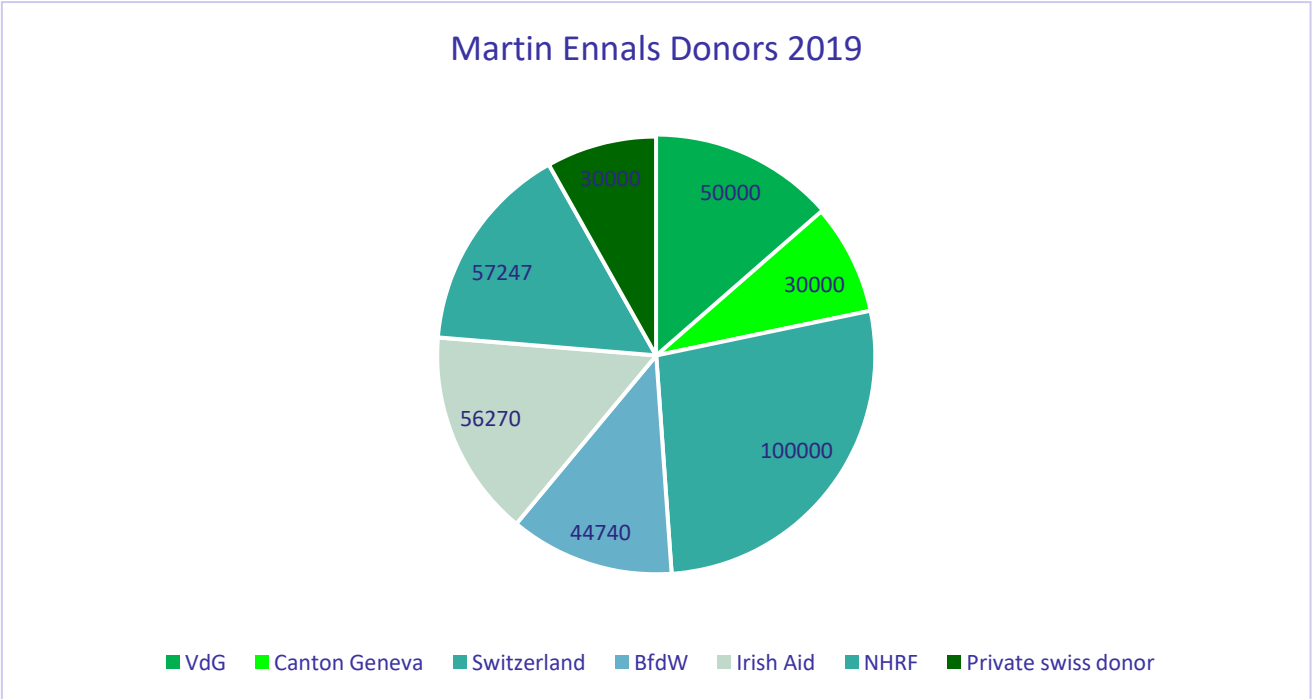
Financial information

The budget for 2019 was foreseen at 489,500 CHF. However, income raised by end of year (December 2019) was 374,902 CHF.



Nonetheless, due to savings elsewhere and a shortfall in spending, expenses at end of year totaled less than expected, at 445,318 CHF. The resulting deficit for the year is of 70,000 CHF.

The difference between budget and expenditure in 2019 can be attributed to two main reasons: (1) three important grants requests for 2019 were denied. (2) The Foundation benefited from expenditure reductions in several budget lines, particularly concerning salaries during the transition between the full-time Director and a new team of two part-time staff persons. In addition, savings were sought whenever possible.



Our donor pool in 2019 was primarily made of governments or public authorities, and some private donations. The Foundation’s reserves were 100,000 CHF at close of 2019.

4. A word of gratitude

Our support to defenders at risk would not be possible without the generosity in time and resources of many individuals and organizations. On behalf of the Foundation staff and Board, we would like to warmly recognize and congratulate all of you who partnered with us in 2019.

Donors 2019:

Confederation of Switzerland
Canton of Geneva
City of Geneva
Irish Aid
Norwegian Human Rights Fund
Mme Françoise Demole
Private swiss foundation

Partners to the ceremony 2019:

City of Geneva
True Heroes Films

Jury member organizations:

Mr. Hans Thoolen, Chair of the Jury
Amnesty International
Human Rights Watch
Human Rights First
International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH)
Front Line Defenders
International Commission of Jurists
HURIDOCS
Brot Für die Welt
World Organization Against Torture (OMCT)
International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)

With special thanks to:

Ordre des Avocats de Genève
Cabinet Interdroit

Regional Panel:

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
Human Rights House Foundation
Civil Rights Defenders

