



Civil Courage News

Journal of the Civil Courage Prize

Vol. 5, No. 2 • September 2009

For Steadfast Resistance to Evil at Great Personal Risk

Wall Street Journal's John Fund to Deliver Keynote at Ceremony

The keynote address at the Civil Courage Prize award ceremony to be held in New York on October 20 will be given by Mr. John Fund, the noted journalist and political commentator. He is a columnist for the *Wall Street Journal*, writes for the Journal's "Political Diary" newsletter and is senior editor and columnist for *The American Spectator*.

Mr. Fund joined the *Wall Street Journal* as deputy features editor and was a member of the editorial board from 1995 through 2001. Articles of his have appeared in *Esquire*, *Reader's Digest*, *The New Republic* and *National Review*. He is author of *How Voter Fraud Threatens Our Democracy*, in which he describes the American election system as "befitting an

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Aminatou Haidar Wins 2009 Civil Courage Prize for Leadership Role in Peaceful Struggle for Self-Determination in North Africa's Western Sahara



Ms. Aminatou Haidar, known as the "Sahrawi Gandhi", a leading defender through peaceful means of the human rights of the Sahrawi people of former Spanish Morocco, will receive the Civil Courage Prize Medal for 2009 and \$50,000 at a ceremony in New York on October 20 to honor her steadfast resistance to evil at great personal risk. She is being recognized specifically for her courageous campaign for self-determination in Western Sahara that is now occupied by Morocco despite an agreement in 1988 calling for a referendum on the issue in the region and an International Court of Justice ruling that rejected Morocco's claims of sovereignty.

Morocco's military rule of the Western Sahara since its invasion in 1975 has

been notable, according to Sahrawi leaders, for forced disappearances and abuses of prisoners of conscience in the area. The region has experienced an extended conflict between Moroccan forces and the Sahrawi independence group, the Polisario Front, since the latter proclaimed the Sahrawi Democratic Republic (SADR) as Western Sahara's legitimate government in exile.

In 1988, Morocco and the Polisario Front agreed to settle the dispute through a UN-administered referendum that would allow the people of Western Sahara to choose between independence or integration into Morocco. The vote has still not been held. A UN-administered cease-fire has been in place since 1991, but talks under UN facilitations begun in 2007 have stalled over

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Despite Cruel Harassment Over Decades Haidar Remains Leading Proponent of Sahrawi Self-Rule Who Has Attracted Wide International Support

continued from page 1 disagreements on participation and whether full independence is an option for the Sahrawis.

Ms. Haidar, a mother of two, is part of a younger generation of Sahrawi leaders working through non-violent means to organize peaceful demonstrations in support of the referendum and to denounce the human rights abuses on both sides of the conflict. Her non-violent efforts have been met with increased police aggression and brutality. In 1987, at the age of 21, Ms. Haidar was one of 700 peaceful demonstrators arrested for participating in a rally in support of the referendum. Later she was “disappeared” without charge or trial and held for four years in secret detention centers, where she and 17 other Sahrawi women were tortured. In 2005, when police detained and beat



her after another peaceful demonstration she sustained serious head and bodily injuries. She was released after seven months in the “black prison” at Al-Ayoun, thanks to pressure from groups like Amnesty International and the European Parliament.

While she was in jail in 2005, she was nominated for the Andrei Sakarov Human Rights Award by the European Parliament and for the Ginetta Sagan Fund Award by Amnesty International (USA Branch). She also was awarded the 2006 Juan Maria Bandres Human Rights Award (Spain), the Santa Lucia Prize (Italy) and the Silver Rose Award of 2007 (Austria). She also was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Ms. Haidar was born in 1967 in El Ayoun, Western Sahara. She holds a baccalaureate in Modern Literature.

Keynote Speaker John Fund Brings Broad Experience in Political Journalism to His Reporting on Current Affairs

continued from page 1 emerging Third World country rather than the world’s leading democracy.” He is co-author as well of *Cleaning House: America’s Campaign for Term Limits*.

Mr. Fund worked as a research analyst for the California State Legislature in Sacramento before beginning his journalism career in 1982 as a reporter for the syndicated columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak. In 1993, he received the Warren Brookes Award for journalistic excellence from the American Legislative Exchange Council.

In recent reporting for the *Wall Street Journal*, Mr. Fund notably covered the Oslo Freedom Forum, organized by the Human Rights Foundation of New York

in an article that appeared in WSJ.com on June 5, 2009. He reported that Thor Halvorsen, a human rights activist, and the conference’s 33 year-old founder, said, “It’s pretty simple. We all should want freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom from torture, freedom to travel, due process and freedom to keep what belongs to you.” Remarkably, he said, attendees did not attack the US or other Western nations; rather the emphasis was on promoting basic human rights.

The text of his article, entitled *Human Rights Beyond Ideology* may be found at: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124417342925888153.html>.

We are often asked about the procedure followed in determining the awardees of the Civil Courage Prize. The first point to note is that we do not think of it as an event, with a winner, like Wimbledon. Rather, we just seek worthy exemplars of Civil Courage as we define it: “steadfast resistance to evil at great personal risk.” Every word counts in this definition: steadfast, rather than a single occurrence; resistance to evil rather than defending human rights; and great risk, often, alas, manifested by imprisonment or worse. Our earlier awards were intended to set the tone: Raoul Wallenberg rescued potential victims of the Nazi death camps, which were evil; Judge Falcone fought the Mafia, which is evil. Both were martyred.

As to the methodology, we invite non-profit organizations and selected individuals to nominate candidates, which can be done using a form found on our website.

The nominations received are reviewed by our staff to establish that they fit the criteria I mentioned, plus some others, such as that we prefer to avoid consecutive awards in the same region; or an award closely following another very important one, e.g., the Nobel; or deeds in the line of duty, as by a civil servant. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn imposed another, non-violence. At some point we also verify the biographical details.

The list then goes to our distinguished Advisors, who rate the nominations and return them. John Swing set for us a ranking system of 1-2-4-5, to move the answer toward the two ends by omitting 3, thinning out the middle and thus giving a crisper result.

The Trustees, with the Advisors’ rankings in hand, then choose the single most exceptional candidate, usually following the Advisors’ consensus. The “also-rans” are carried over to the next year.

It is an inspiring task to contemplate the lives and deeds of these extraordinary men and women who have contributed so much.

John Train

John Train

Past Prize Winners Face Further Severe Hardships



Natasa Kandic, 2000

Persecuted activist, Belgrade

Ms. Kandic remains deeply committed to her work with the Humanitarian Law Centre (HLC), compiling and distributing well-regarded investigative reports on the violent abuses perpetrated by all sides of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia.

In 2009 she joined with several hundred non-governmental organizations in the region to form a Regional Commission for Establishing the Facts about War Crimes (REKOM). While political elites in the region have failed to address the issue of war crimes effectively, Kandic sees REKOM as an opportunity to successfully look at war crimes from a regional, as opposed to national perspective. While war crime trials are important, Kandic believes that they are not enough for the victims to receive sufficient satisfaction, nor were trials enough to prevent attempts at historical revisionism.

In June of 2009 Ms. Kandic withdrew from the trial of the alleged killers of three Albanian-American brothers who were murdered execution-style in Serbia in 1999. Ms. Kandic was representing the families of the victims. In an open letter to the presiding Justice, Ms. Kandic and the families of the three victims wrote that they decided to stop participating in the trial because they believe that it is “not intended to bring justice to the victims but to protect those who ordered the cold-blooded murder.” They called the trial a “simulation of justice. The family and I refuse to give legitimacy to the trial which has not provided a single truthful word about what happened.”

For more information on Ms. Kandic, visit HLC’s website at www.hlc-rdc.org



Emadeddin Baghi, 2004

Imprisoned for exposing assassinations of Iranian intellectuals

On May 20, 2009 Mr. Baghi was honored with the prestigious Martin Ennals Award, a unique collaboration among ten of the world’s leading human rights organizations to give protection to human rights defenders worldwide. The jury is composed of the following NGOs: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Human Rights First, International Federation for Human Rights, World Organization Against Torture, Front Line, International Commission of Jurists, German Diakonie, International Service for Human Rights and HURIDOCS.

Mr. Baghi has spent four years in prison over the past decade for his campaigning against the death penalty and other rights activities. Currently out of jail, he still faces charges relating to his work for the defense of prisoners rights. Though he suffers from serious heart and kidney ailments, he has continued to advocate for prisoners’ rights, to report on child executions, and to publish independent newspapers. Mr. Baghi’s ability to be to be seen and heard in Iran is becoming more and more limited. This is regretted by many as his clinical and thorough assessment of Islamic precepts and how they can be used against the use of the death penalty are innovative and would greatly assist the human rights debate in the Muslim world.

For more information on Mr. Baghi, please visit www.emadbaghi.com/en



Min Ko Naing, 2005

Campaigner for democracy in Burma

The 2007 protests and crackdown in Burma received worldwide attention. Min Ko Naing, the prime leader of the “88 Students Generation” and a force behind the latest pro-democracy demonstrations, was arrested and imprisoned August 21, 2007.

In November 2008 Min Ko Naing and eight other student activists were sentenced to 65 years in prison, part of the ongoing crackdown on opposition to the ruling junta. All nine charged had openly condemned the lack of justice in Myanmar’s military-appointed judiciary. He has been transferred to the remote Kengtung prison in Shan state. Like many political prisoners in Burma, he suffers extremely from poor health, and has a serious eye infection. Min Ko Naing has already spent 15 years in jail for his role in the 1988 uprising. Burma currently holds upwards of 2,100 political prisoners, including journalists, activists, politicians and lawyers.

In May of 2009 he was awarded South Korea’s Gwangju Prize for Human Rights, which honors individuals and groups that have contributed to promoting and advancing human rights, democracy, and peace in their work.

For more news on Min Ko Naing and the situation in Burma, visit www.uscampaignforburma.org.

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† = deceased

Past Honorees

- | | | | |
|-------------|---|-------------|--|
| 2008 | Ali Salem
<i>Egyptian author and journalist. Voice for peace and reason in the Middle East</i> | 2002 | Vladimiro Roca Antunez
<i>Champion of freedom, Cuba</i> |
| | | | Gustavo Arcos Bergnes
(Honorable Mention)
<i>Early democracy activist, Cuba</i> |
| 2007 | Phillip Buck
<i>Imprisoned in China for guiding North Korean refugees in their escape to freedom</i> | 2001 | Paul Kamara
<i>Editor and journalist fighting tyranny in Sierra Leone</i> |
| 2006 | Rafael Marques de Morais
<i>Journalist who exposed the slaughter of Angolans and the plundering of national assets</i> | 2000 | Natasa Kandic
<i>Persecuted journalist and activist, Belgrade</i> |
| 2005 | Min Ko Naing
<i>Imprisoned campaigner for democracy in Burma</i> | | Sergei Khodorovich
(Honorable Mention)
<i>Solzhenitsyn collaborator exiled to hard labor in Siberia</i> |
| | Anna Politkovskaya
<i>Fearless reporter on atrocities in Chechnya, assassinated</i> | | Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer†
<i>Anti-Nazi martyr</i> |
| | Munir Said Thalib†
<i>Exposed disappearances and corruption in Indonesia, assassinated</i> | | Judge Giovanni Falcone†
<i>Assassinated while prosecuting the Sicilian Mafia</i> |
| 2004 | Emadeddin Baghi
<i>Imprisoned for exposing assassinations of Iranian intellectuals</i> | | Rosemary Nelson†
<i>Civil rights lawyer, assassinated while defending accused persons in Northern Ireland</i> |
| | Lovemore Madhuku
<i>Lawyer persecuted for demanding constitutional reform in Zimbabwe</i> | | Neelan Tiruchelvam†
<i>Lawyer and educator, killed by a suicide bomber while working for solutions to Tamil-Sri Lankan conflict</i> |
| | Abdul al-Latif al-Mayah†
<i>Iraqi political scientist and human rights advocate, assassinated</i> | | Raoul Wallenberg†
<i>Saved thousands of Jews from extermination</i> |
| 2003 | Shahnaz Bukhari
<i>Battler against the burning and other abuse of Pakistani women</i> | | |

† = posthumous

The Civil Courage Prize honors civil courage—steadfast resistance to evil at great personal risk—rather than military valor. The acts so recognized should have taken place deliberately over time.

Nominations for the Prize are solicited primarily from non-profit, non-governmental organizations worldwide. Further information may be obtained from our website: www.civildcourageprize.org.

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.”

—Edmund Burke



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