
2011 UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence to be awarded to Anarkali Honaryar (Afghanistan) and Khaled Abu Awwad (Palestine)

Afghan women's rights campaigner Anarkali Honaryar and Palestinian peace activist Khaled Abu Awwad are the winners of the 2011 UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence. The US\$ 100,000 award will be divided equally between the two laureates, who were selected by an international jury. The award ceremony will be held at UNESCO in Paris on 9 December 2011 (room XI).

Anarkali Honaryar (Afghanistan) is rewarded for her commitment and tireless work to improve the conditions of women and minority groups in Afghanistan and to promote the ideals of human dignity, human rights, mutual respect and tolerance. Anarkali Honaryar received public recognition for helping women who suffer from domestic abuse, forced marriages and gender discrimination. She is also known for advocating the rights of Afghanistan's minorities. After the parliamentary elections of 2010, Honaryar became the first non-Muslim woman member of Afghanistan's Wolesi Jirga, the lower house of parliament.

Khaled Abu Awwad (Palestine) is cited for his efforts to promote tolerance, peace and non-violence through his work as a peace activist and leader in the reconciliation process between Palestinians and Israelis. Active on both sides of the Israeli Palestinian divide, Abu Awwad is the General Manager of the Palestinian Branch of the Parents Circle Families Forum (PCFF), an organization of Palestinians and Israelis who have lost immediate family members in the conflict. In 2006, he - along with other leaders and prominent members of the Palestinian peace movement - founded Al-Tariq (The Way), the Palestinian Institution for Development and Democracy, of which he has been the manager and Executive Director since 2006.

During the award ceremony, a special tribute will be paid to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi (Myanmar), Nobel Peace Prize laureate and laureate of the 2002 UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence. Video messages by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and by the founder of the Prize, Madanjeet Singh, a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador and Founder of the South Asia Foundation, will be presented during the event.

Other eminent personalities attending the ceremony include French diplomat and human rights activist Stéphane Hessel, laureate of the UNESCO-Bilbao Prize for the Promotion of a Culture of Human Rights, and Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the UN from 1992 to 1996.

Turkish philosopher Ioanna Kuçuradi, Chairperson of the International Jury of the UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize, and the two laureates, Anarkali Honaryar and Khaled Abu Awwad, will take the floor during the ceremony.

The UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence is dedicated to advancing the spirit of tolerance in the arts, education, culture, science and communication. It is awarded every two years to individuals or institutions for outstanding contributions to the promotion of tolerance and non-violence.

The Prize was created in 1995 on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the birth of the Mahatma Gandhi, thanks to the generosity of the Indian writer and diplomat Madanjeet Singh.

The members of the International Jury of the 2011 UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize are Ioanna Kuçuradi (Turkey), Chairperson, Maurice Glele Ahanhanzo (Benin), Vice-Chairperson, Kamal Hossain (Bangladesh), Masateru Nakagawa (Japan) and Mokhtar Taleb-Bendiab (Algeria).