



PRESS RELEASE

2020 VÁCLAV HAVEL HUMAN RIGHTS PRIZE AWARDED TO LOUJAIN AL-HATHLOUL

19 April, 2021; Strasbourg, Prague

Today, on Monday 19 April, 2021, Loujain Al-Hathloul was ceremonially announced as laureate of the 2020 Václav Havel Human Rights Prize at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. The award is presented by the Council of Europe in cooperation with the Václav Havel Library and the Charter 77 Foundation.

The 60,000-euro prize was presented at a special ceremony on the opening day of the spring plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), held in a “hybrid” format in Strasbourg, and streamed live in five languages.

LOUJAIN AL-HATHLOUL (Saudi Arabia)

is one of the leaders of the Saudi feminist movement. Ms Al-Hathloul is a prominent women’s rights activist known for defying the ban on women driving in Saudi Arabia and for opposing the Saudi male guardianship system. She has been detained on several occasions, sentenced and has been in prison since 2018.

“My warm congratulations to Loujain Al-Hathloul, whose courage and determination in defending the rights of others has indeed been outstanding,” said PACE President Rik Daems, who chaired the selection panel. “All three nominees were involved in some way in promoting women’s rights or gender equality, and all three are working beyond the borders of Europe. This year’s nominees have reminded us that everyone is entitled to dignity and respect for their rights – whoever we are and wherever we come from. Today, we salute your courage and your achievements.”

„Loujain Al-Hathloul is a shining example of courage and indomitability for a whole generation of young women, and for us all. The indefatigable struggle for human rights of the Nuns of the Drukpa Order and of Julienne Lusenge, the two other finalists of this year's Prize, is equally admirable. Václav Havel would applaud,” summed up Michael Žantovský, the Václav Havel Library executive director and a member of the selection panel.

The two other shortlisted nominees, Nuns of the Drukpa Order (Nepal) and Julienne Lusenge (Congo), also received diplomas during the ceremony, which was delayed by several months due to the exceptional situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN HONOUR OF THE LAUREATE

The Václav Havel Library is organising an [international on-line conference in honour of the laureate](#) right after the ceremony. The conference will be streamed live in English on www.havelchannel.com.

VÁCLAV HAVEL HUMAN RIGHTS PRIZE

The Václav Havel Human Rights Prize is awarded each year by PACE, in partnership with the Václav Havel Library and the Charter 77 Foundation, “to honour outstanding civil society action in defence of human rights in Europe and beyond”. It consists of a sum of 60,000 euros, a trophy and a diploma.

Since its creation, the Prize has been awarded in turn jointly to Ilham Tohti and the Youth Initiative for Human Rights (2019), Oyub Titiev (2018), Murat Arslan (2017), Nadia Murad (2016), Ludmilla Alexeeva (2015), Anar Mammadli (2014) and Ales Bialiatski (2013).

Nominations are currently open for the 2021 Prize, and can be submitted via [this form](#) on the website of the Parliamentary Assembly, signed by at least five sponsors.

Václav Havel Library: Pavel Hájek, tel. +420 773 667 858
Charter 77 Foundation: Jana Patková, jana.patkova@bariery.cz