



PRESS RELEASE

THE WINNER OF THE 2017 VÁCLAV HAVEL HUMAN RIGHTS PRIZE

9 October, 2017; Strasbourg, Prague

Today, on Monday 9 October, 2017, Murat Arslan was ceremonially announced as laureate of the 2017 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.

In detention since 2016, Murat Arslan is a former Rapporteur of the Turkish Constitutional Court and President of the now dissolved Association for the Union of Judges and Prosecutors (YARSAV). He is a staunch supporter of the independence of the judiciary.

The two other shortlisted nominees – the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, an NGO which particularly focuses on access to justice and the rights of asylum seekers and refugees, and Father Georg Sporschill (Austria), a Jesuit who has devoted his life to the care of the most vulnerable, notably children, also received diplomas during the ceremony.

The Václav Havel Human Rights Prize draws attention to extraordinary actions in the field of human rights in Europe and elsewhere. It is presented annually by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in partnership with the Václav Havel Library and the Charta 77 Foundation. It comes with a monetary award of EUR 60,000.

The Prize is awarded in memory of Václav Havel, playwright, opponent of totalitarianism, architect of the Velvet Revolution of 1989, President of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic, and an enduring symbol of opposition to despotism.

The first Václav Havel Prize was awarded in 2013 to Belarusian human rights activist Ales Bialiatski. The Azerbaijani human rights defender Anar Mammadli won the Prize in 2014, and veteran Russian human rights defender Ludmilla Alexeeva was the winner in 2015. Last year's winner was Yazidi human rights activist Nadia Murad.

What Price Human Rights?

The Václav Havel Library has organised an international conference in honour of the laureate; [What Price Human Rights?](#) will take place at the Prague Crossroads on 11 October, 2017.

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