



PRESS RELEASE

## WINNER OF THE 2019 VÁCLAV HAVEL HUMAN RIGHTS PRIZE

30 September, 2019; Strasbourg, Prague

Today, on Monday 30 September, 2019, Ilham Tohti and Youth Initiative for Human Rights were ceremonially announced as laureates of the 2019 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.

**Mr Ilham TOHTI (China)** The nominee is a renowned Uyghur scientist and professor of economics in China. He has worked for over 20 years to foster dialogue and understanding between Uyghurs and Chinese. In September 2014, he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

**Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR)** was established in 2003. It works on promoting reconciliation through building connections between young people across the Balkans, from different ethnic groups, regions and countries, to enhance the participation of young people in the transitional justice process, work together for human rights and to build links that will prevent the re-emergence of the ethnic conflict that devastated the region for so many years.

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 Lyudmila Alexeyeva was the winner in 2015. In 2016 the Prize was awarded to Yazidi human rights activist Nadia Murad and in 2017 the Prize received Turkish lawyer and judge Murat Arslan. Last year's winner was Oyub Titiev, human rights defender from Russian federation.

### Froma Wall to Wall

The Václav Havel Library has organised an international conference in honour of the laureate – [From Wall ro Wall](#) – which will take place at the Prague Crossroads on 2 October, 2019.

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