
Press Release: Razan Zaitouneh Wins Anna Politkovskaya Award 2011

Razan Zaitouneh

(Syria)

IS THE WINNER OF THE 2011 RAW in WAR ANNA POLITKOVSKAYA AWARD

for women human rights defenders from war and conflict

Today, 7th October, on the anniversary of Anna Politkovskaya's murder and on the day when the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to three women human rights defenders from conflict zones, like Anna, we honour yet another courageous woman – Razan Zaitouneh from Syria with the 2011 RAW in WAR (Reach All Women in War) Anna Politkovskaya Award, for her courage in speaking out against the atrocities currently facing the people of her country.

Through her website, SHRIL, she is determined to keep the international community informed about the plight of the Syrian people and protesters in their bid for peace and freedom. Her determination to speak the truth has forced her into hiding as well as the torture and detention of her family members. We honour her for her courage and bravery in the face of danger. At a time when the governments of Russia and China have vetoed a UN Security Council resolution condemning the Syrian authorities over their violent crackdown on anti-government protesters, we honour Razan Zaitouneh because of her selfless need to bring international attention to those unable to have the world's ear.

'It means a lot to me to receive an award in your name, Anna, as a Russian citizen – even as the Russian government continues to support the Syrian regime... This vividly exemplifies that what we share in humanity transcends languages, nationalities, and borders, just as tyranny and corruption share the same essence although they differ in details. ... Each step forward towards peace and justice in any part of the world benefits all humanity.'

I would like to remind the world that the Syrian people, who were victims to all those crimes yet still patient and persistent, are people who deserve much more than complicit silence, or timid criticism from those who have failed to refer this regime to the International Criminal Court despite acknowledging its crimes.'

– Razan Zaitouneh, 'Syrians Want Freedom', published on 7 October 2011 in Novaya Gazeta (Moscow) and Huffington Post (UK)

In presenting the award to Razan, a group of more than 100 influential cultural and political leaders who joined the Committee of Supporters for the award, including Nobel Peace Prize laureates, has today called again to bring to justice those who killed Anna Politkovskaya and Natalia Estemirova.

'We call again on the Russian government to bring to justice those who killed Anna and Natalia and their colleagues, and to end the killings of journalists and human rights defenders in the Russian Federation. We call on the world's leaders to pledge to do everything in their power to protect the journalists and human rights defenders who work in areas of war and conflict.

We owe it to the memory of Anna and Natalia to protect the very few who continue to speak out on behalf of those who are still not listened to or heard.'

Among them are Nobel Women's Initiative, Mairead Maguire (Nobel Peace Prize Laureate), Betty Williams (Nobel Peace Prize Laureate), Jody Williams (Nobel Peace Prize Laureate), Shirin Ebadi (Nobel Peace Prize Laureate), Rigoberta Menchú Tum (Nobel Peace Prize Laureate), Archbishop Desmond Tutu (Nobel Peace Prize Laureate), Tatiana Yankelevich, Vaclav Havel, Jon Snow, John Pilger, Amy Goodman, Jeremy Bowen, Andre Glucksmann, Gloria Steinem, Sergey Kovalyov, Alexei Simonov, Vladimir Bukovsky, Svetlana Gannushkina, Lyudmila Alekseeva, Karinna Moskalenko, Malalai Joya (2008 Award winner), Leila Alikarami (2009 Award winner), Dr. Halima Bashir (2010 Award winner), Gillian Slovo, Eva Hoffman, Adam Michnik, Oleg Panfilov, Tom Stoppard, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Natasha Kandic, Elisabeth Rehn, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Mariane Pearl, Azar Nafisi, Asma Jahangir, Carl Gershman, Hina Jilani, Susan Sarandon, Jane Birkin, Sophie Shihab, Naomi Klein, Sister Helen Prejean, Ariel Dorfman, Vanessa Redgrave, Eve Ensler, Michael Cunningham, John Sweeney, Jonathan Schell, Noam Chomsky, Marina Litvinenko, Lucy Ash, Sussan Deyhim, Heidi Bradner, Desmond O'Malley, Anne Nivat, Annabel Markova, Lord Frank Judd, Lord Nicolas Rea, Lord Anthony Giddens, Lord Nazir Ahmed, Mukesh Kapila CBE, Baroness Molly Meacher, Baroness Vivien Stern, Baroness Helena Kennedy QC, Yakin Erturk, Elena Kudimova, Andrey Nekrasov, Meglena Kuneva, Peter Gabriel, Stina Scott, Anna Stavitskaya, Dubravka Ugresic, Katrina vanden Heuvel, Victor Navasky, Aidan White, Holly Near, Joan Baez, Elizabeth Frank, Elizabeth Kostova, Bill Bowring, Irena Grudzinska Gross, Jenny Diski, Monica Ali, Isa Blyden, Nayereh Tohidi, Claire Bertschinger, Tsvetana Maneva, and others.

For the full list of the Committee of Supporters to the Anna Politkovskaya Award please see:
<http://www.rawinwar.org/content/view/65/202/>

More information available at:

- RAW in WAR
- YouTube
- Huffington Post (UK)
- Novaya Gazeta (Moscow)

FOR INTERVIEWS, PICTURES, PRESS ADVISORY OR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

RAW IN WAR Telephone: + 44 (0) 7592 391 725

Lizzie Norton - media@rawinwar.org

Zara Drei - media@rawinwar.org

Amy Greenbank - info@rawinwar.org

Friederike Behr (in Moscow) - info@rawinwar.org

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