



THE EDELSTAM PRIZE

PRESS RELEASE

Montevideo, 4th of March, 2011

URUGUAY'S PRESIDENT, JOSÉ MUJICA, SIGNS THE PROCLAMATION TO SUPPORT THE EDELSTAM PRIZE

The Edelstam Prize is a Sweden-based international monetary award, administrated by the Harald Edelstam Foundation. The Edelstam Prize is awarded for outstanding contributions and exceptional courage in standing up for one's beliefs in the Defence of Human Rights. Uruguay's President yesterday signed the proclamation to support the Edelstam Prize.

The Edelstam Prize was represented by Caroline Edelstam, grandchild to Ambassador Harald Edelstam and Chair in the Edelstam Prize jury, and by Ambassador Jan Axel Nordlander, Sweden's former Ambassador for Human Rights and today Chair of the Edelstam Prize Nomination Committee. During Thursday, they met with President José Mujica, who is the second Latin American president to sign the proclamation. During 2009, Chile's President, Michelle Bachelet, signed the proclamation during a ceremony in the Moneda Palace in Santiago den Chile.

"It is fantastic to receive Uruguay's support in our work and it also proves how important it is to the President and the Government to support the defense of the Human Rights, as a military dictatorship not that long ago, during a longer period so brutally abused and to which President José Mujica himself is a surviving victim from. It is a great honor for us as representatives of the Edelstam Prize to be President Mujica's guests of honor, "said Caroline Edelstam, Chair of the Edelstam Prize Jury.

The delegation also met, among others, the Vice Minister for Human Rights and the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs. During Thursday morning the Mayor of Montevideo arranged a ceremony at the Harald Edelstam Square in the capital, followed by lunch for the Edelstam Prize's representatives.

The Edelstam Prize is to be handed out for the first time in April 2012. The winner of the Edelstam Prize can be a private person or a person who serves in Government, international or national organisations. The winner should be an individual who has acted in Ambassador Harald Edelstam's spirit in a country/countries where Human Rights, according to international law, have been violated. The laureate must have shown outstanding capabilities in analysing and handling complex situations and in finding ways, even unconventional and creative ones, to defend Human Rights. The candidate has, presumably in a complex situation, been able to take a decisive role in helping threatened people or directly saving human lives. Civic courage is a central parameter in the selection of the successful candidate.

The international jury is chaired by **Caroline Edelstam**, Harald Edelstam's granddaughter and co-founder of the Harald Edelstam Foundation. Justice **Louise Arbour**, former UN High Commissioner of Human Rights represents the North Americas, Nobel Peace Prize Winner in 2003, Judge **Shirin Ebadi**, represents Asia; Africa is represented by Dr. **Pascoal Mocumbi**, former Prime Minister of Mozambique (1994-2004). Professor **Philip Alston**, UN's special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, represents Oceania. Europe is represented by Judge **Baltasar Garzón**, who served on Spain's central criminal court and who is consistently fighting for Human Rights. Baltasar Garzón is most famous for indicting the Chilean president, General Augusto Pinochet for the alleged deaths and torture of Spanish citizens.

“Harald Edelstam sets an example, under very difficult circumstances, in taking upon himself the defense of human rights. He is an example for people like me who think that all efforts are too small to achieve justice in the world and to eliminate impunity from our legal systems. I very much appreciate your invitation to participate in the Prize Jury of the Edelstam Prize for Human Rights,” says Judge Baltasar Garzón.

“I feel deeply honored to be serving on the international jury for the Harald Edelstam Human Rights Prize. The life of Harald Edelstam shows us the profound difference that one person can make in the lives of others. His exemplary life sets an example not only for his great country, but indeed for all humanity to follow,” says Louise Arbour, former UN High Commissioner of Human Rights, representative for the North Americas on the Edelstam Prize Jury.

The Nomination Committee is chaired by Ambassador **Jan Axel Nordlander**, Sweden's former Ambassador for Human Rights. On the Committee are also Professor **Sadiq Jalal Al-Azm**, a prominent philosopher of Syrian origin striving for intellectual freedom and freedom of speech, Professor **Vitit Muntarbhorn**, United Nations former Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Democratic People's Republic of Korea and a well known advocate of the rights of the child, Deputy **Tucapel Jiménez**, member of the Chilean Chamber of Deputies' Commission for Human Rights, Ms. **Silvia Escobar**, Spain's Ambassador for Human Rights and former Chair of Amnesty Spain, and Professor **Yash Ghai**, scholar within constitutional law and the head of the Constitution Advisory Support Unit of the United Nations Development Programme in Nepal and former Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Cambodia on Human Rights.

“Persecution and abuse of human rights defenders and whistle blowers are increasing,” says Jan Axel Nordlander, Chair of the Nomination Committee of the Edelstam Prize. “Many around the world sacrifice their own and their families' safety and future, even their lives fighting for human rights. Encouragement and recognition of the civil courage which is necessary in order not to give up the fight is the important purpose of the Edelstam Prize,” concludes Ambassador Nordlander.

The Edelstam Prize is named after, and awarded in the memory of, the Swedish diplomat, Ambassador Harald Edelstam (1913-1989). Harald Edelstam distinguished himself as diplomat by his professional competence, his bravery and his civic courage in the fight for Human Rights. He was an early proponent and symbol of what is today known as the “Responsibility to Protect” and his memorable acts contributed to save more than a thousand lives.

For further information, please contact:

Caroline Edelstam, Chair of the Edelstam Prize Jury, and board member of the Harald Edelstam Foundation.

Tel: +46 (0)706 98 72 23, e-mail: caroline.edelstam@edelstamprize.org

Jan Axel Nordlander, Chair of the Edelstam Prize Nomination Committee

Tel: +46 (0)708-61 99 34, e-mail: jan.axel.nordlander@edelstamprize.org

www.edelstamprize.org
