

## Winners of the 2024 edition of the Human Rights Prize of the French Republic

The 12 August 2024 marked the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Geneva Conventions which is the cornerstone of international humanitarian law. Convention IV sets out the obligation to protect all civilian populations which are not, or are no longer, parties to the conflict.

On this occasion, the **National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH) - the French National Human Rights Institution - decided to award the 37th Human Rights Prize of the French Republic for actions to “the protection of the rights of civilians in any situation related to an armed conflict”**.

This theme relates particularly to the CNCDH's mandate as it is an implementation committee of International Humanitarian Law. 2024 was marked by a sharp increase in the number of civilians killed as well as by a growing number of serious human rights violations in situations of armed conflict. Given this context, it is important to remember that in all circumstances people's dignity and fundamental rights must be protected and respected. International Humanitarian Law is neither an empty promise nor charity, but a body of law which engages all parties to the conflict and all States across the world to ensure its enforcement.

**For a better recognition of the role of civil society in the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide.**

The CNCDH's Human Rights Prize of the French Republic "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" has been awarded each year since 1988. The Prize distinguishes actions and projects which contribute to the protection and the promotion of human rights, in the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, regardless of nationalities or borders.

With this Prize, the French Republic wishes to support individual and collective actions in favor of the defense and protection of Human Rights in the world. The Prize recognizes the fundamental role played by civil society, and in particular non-governmental organizations, in the promotion and protection of these rights.

The winners each receive an award of €14,000, and the winners and the winners with respect to “special mentions” benefit from a diplomatic protection provided by the French Republic. The jury is made up of commission members and is chaired by Jean-Marie Burguburu, the President of the CNCDH.

*This year, the prize will be presented to the winners by Didier Migaud, Minister of Justice, and Jean-Marie Burguburu, President of the CNCDH, at a ceremony on 10 December, Human Rights Day.*

### The prize list for 2024

#### Winners

The jury for the Human Rights Prize decided to award the Prize to:

#### **Mandela Center International – Cameroon**

This NGO, based in Cameroon, has been awarded a prize for its project to help document serious human rights violations and facilitate access to justice for victims in conflict zones in North-West and South-West Cameroon, as well as in the Central African Republic.

#### **Ezgulik Human Rights Society - Uzbekistan**

The Ezgulik Human Rights Society, founded in 2002, is the only independent organization dedicated to human rights registered in the Republic of Uzbekistan. The winning project will raise awareness among the civilian population in Uzbekistan of the forced conscription into the Russian army of Uzbek workers and prisoners living in Russia.

### **Organization of Citizens for a New Haiti (OCNH)**

OCNH plans to set up an accommodation center for internally displaced persons (psychosocial support, medical care, financial assistance to help with long-term relocation) on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince. Particular attention will be given to victims of sexual violence.

### **Ludirlena PÉREZ CARVAJAL - Colombia**

Ludirlena Pérez Carvajal is a Colombian women's rights activist and survivor of sexual violence at the hands of FARC. Through *Asociacion de Mujeres Victimas del Conflicto Gestionando Paz* an association she co-founded, she runs the 'Mi vida mi gestion' project, which aims to support survivors of sexual violence committed during the armed conflict, to enable them to play a full part in the justice and peace process.

### **César (pseudonym) - Syria**

César was a photographer for the Syrian regime's police. Shocked by the atrocities he saw, César left the army and fled Syria in 2013, taking with him thousands of photographs of the bodies of tortured people, which now form the 'César file'. He has testified before the US Congress, the UK House of Commons and the European Parliament to ensure that the atrocities committed by the Syrian regime are known and documented, and that the perpetrators are prosecuted.

### **Special mentions**

The jury also awarded a special mention to:

### **Céline BARDET**

Céline Bardet is a French lawyer and international criminal investigator. She specializes in security issues, war crimes and post-conflict justice. She is committed to the recognition of rape as a weapon of war and in 2014 she founded the *NGO We Are NOT Weapons of War*, which is dedicated to fight against sexual violence in conflict and crisis zones.

### **Sah Terrence ANIMBOM - Cameroon**

Sah Terrence Animbom is a Cameroonian journalist committed to promoting human

rights. He is particularly interested in the protection of children and gender-based violence, in the context of the 'Anglophone crisis' (armed conflict that has been going on since 2017 in the two English-speaking regions of Cameroon, the North-West and the South-West, pitting the Cameroonian government against various separatist groups).

### **SOS Méditerranée**

Created in 2015, SOS Méditerranée carries out rescue operations in the Mediterranean. Every year, it provides help and protection to thousands of people, many of whom are fleeing situations of armed conflict.

### **Armenia Peace Initiative - Armenia**

Founded in 2020, Armenia Peace Initiative is an endowment fund governed by French law. Its aim is to help and promote any action that fosters peace in the South Caucasus, particularly in Armenia. The award-winning project aims to train civilians and medical and rescue personnel in the Tavush region of Armenia, on the border with Azerbaijan, in first aid in extreme conditions, in other words combat rescue.

### **Avocats Sans Frontières France and SEMA Ukraine**

Avocats sans Frontières France and the Ukrainian network SEMA are proposing a project to combat impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the context of the war in Ukraine.

The project involves capacity-building activities for Ukrainian lawyers and the coordination of actions to combat impunity for major crimes committed in the context of the war in Ukraine

The Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme (National Consultative Commission on Human Rights, CNCDH) is the French national institution for the promotion and protection of human rights, established in accordance with the Paris Principles and accredited with A status at the United Nations. The CNCDH is a pluralist and independent body whose role is to monitor, advise and follow up with the Government and Parliament on all human rights issues. It also provides human rights education and awareness-raising.

Since 1996, the CNCDH is also the National

Commission for the implementation of  
international humanitarian law.