Civil Courage News
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For Steadfast Resistance to Evil at Great Personal Risk

Italian Nicola Gratteri Wins 2014 Civil Courage Prize for Relentless Efforts to Prosecute Mafia

The 2014 Civil Courage Prize will be awarded to Nicola Gratteri, Italian magistrate and Special Prosecutor for Reggio Calabria. He will travel to New York for the ceremony in October where he will receive the medal and $50,000 prize. For the past 25 years, and under constant threat to his life, Gratteri has been on the front lines of the battle against the Mafia group known as ‘Ndrangheta. Gratteri has been relentless in his efforts to stop the organization’s international narco-trafficking, arms dealing and other illegal activities. Though particularly active in the Southern Italian region of Calabria, the ‘Ndrangheta has far-reaching global influence, including illegal activities and investments in Europe, the US and Africa. Their financial relationships extend to South American cocaine barons as well as drug dealers in the US and even the IRA.

Gratteri has had a seminal role in the arrest of more than 120 criminal fugitives, and personally led investigations which have eradicated some of the most important branches of the ‘Ndrangheta. Gratteri’s success is due not only to his extensive knowledge of the intricacies of the apparatus of the organization, but also to his remarkable and seemingly fearless dedication to his goal. He has a deep understanding of the methods, legal and illegal, used by the organization, on an international scale, in order to move illegal gains around the globe and into the ‘real’ economy. Just in the area of narcotics, the Mafia organizations of Sicily, Naples and Calabria are estimated to have an annual turnover in excess of Euro100 billion. Although the Italian state has had some occasional success in stemming the activities of the Mafia and seizing its assets, Gratteri believes the ‘Ndrangheta is not only growing wealthier but also strengthening its grip on society, for example, coercing support through both income and jobs in exchange for votes in local elections.

The Civil Courage Prize honors civil courage—steadfast resistance to evil at great personal risk—rather than military valor. The acts so recognized should have taken place deliberately, over time.

Nominations for the Prize are solicited primarily from non-profit, non-governmental organizations worldwide. Further information may be obtained from our website: www.civilcourageprize.org.

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.
—Edmund Burke

Past Honorees

2013
Dr. Denis Mukwege
Physician and advocate for victims of violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

2012
Yu Jie
Author and advocate for reform in China

2011
Treviño Acharya
Defender of crimes of humanity trialing in India

Lydia Cacho Ribeiro
Champion of abused women and children in Mexico

2010
Andrew White
Stealth advocate for peace in the Middle East

2009
Antonio Harclerode
Champion of the nonviolent campaign for self-determination in Western Sahara

2008
Ali Salem
Egyptian activist and journalist. Voice for peace and reason in the Middle East

2007
Phillip Buck
Impeccable China for guiding North Korean refugees in their escape to freedom

2006
Rafael Marques de Morais
Journalist who exposed the slaughter of children and the plundering of national assets

2005
Min Ko Naing
Long-imprisoned campaigner for democracy in Burma

Anna Politkovskaya
Fearless reporter on atrocities in Chechnya, assassinated

Munir Said Thalib
Exposed disappearances and corruption in Indonesia, assassinated

2004
Emad mesh Baghi
Impeccable for exposing assassinations of Iranian intellectuals

Lorena Morel Madihu
Lawyer persecuted for demanding constitutional reform in Zimbabwe

Ali al-Malik
Espoused political science and human rights advocate, assassinated

2003
Shahnaz Bakhari
Battler for the burned and other abused of Pakistani women

2002
Vladimiro Roca Antuanez
Champion of freedom, Cuba

2001
Paul Kamara
Editor and journalist fighting tyranny in Sierra Leone

2000
Natan Kadas
Persecuted journalist and activist, Belgrade

Sergio Khodorkovich (Honorable Mention)
Solomoniya collaborator forced to hard labor in Siberia

Past Dinrich Bonheffer

Anti-Nazi martyr

2013
Judge Giovanni Falcone
Assassinated while pursuing the Sicilian Mafia

2012
Rosemary Nelson
Civil rights lawyer, assassinated while defending accused persons in Northern Ireland

Nestor Tiruchelvan
Lawyer and educator, killed by a suicide bomber while working for solutions to Tamil-Lankan conflict

Raul Wallenberg
Saved thousands of Jews from extermination

† posthumous

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cityscape of New York

New York District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. to deliver Keynote Speech at Ceremony

Cyrus R. Vance Jr., New York County District Attorney since 2010, will give the keynote address at the Civil Courage Prize Ceremony this October 15th. Since his inauguration, Mr. Vance has enhanced the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office as a national leader in criminal justice by expanding the office’s expertise on an array of 21st century crimes including shanty theft, cybercrime, white-collar fraud, hate crimes, terrorism, domestic violence, human trafficking, and gang-related crimes. Mr. Vance has had considerable personal experience in prosecuting organized crime, dating from his time as Assistant District Attorney in New York in the 1980s. At the time of a recent organized crime arrest in New York, Vance said, “This indictment serves as a reminder that organized crime is still a persistent problem in New York City.” He added that the Rackets Bureau “has a long tradition of investigating and prosecuting criminal organizations that use intimidation and fear to make a profit.”

In July 2011, Mr. Vance was elected by his peers to serve as President of the District Attorneys Association of the State of New York for the 2012 term. He also serves as co-chair of the New York State Permanent Commission on Sentencing.

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Gratteri Wins 2014 Civil Courage Prize

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Gratteri, who was born and raised in Reggio Calabria where his family farmed, watched many of his childhood friends go on to become members of the ‘Ndrangheta. Beyond engaging in efforts to stop the organization’s illegal activities, the prosecutor emphasizes the need to focus on weakening the organization’s roots as he witnessed their depth and strength at a local level firsthand. He has created an extensive outreach program to alleviate poverty and create opportunities to engage the local youth in the hope of keeping them from moving into a life of crime.

Gratteri has received countless threats to his life, and is required to be on the move constantly, escorted by bodyguards. Though he accepts that protection and secrecy are part of his life, he also knows that, should the ‘Ndrangheta decide to end his life, there is little he could do. Aware that the influence he has on the group is more in the order of reducing their effectiveness than ever eliminating the ‘Ndrangheta completely, he nonetheless resolutely pursues justice and was recently named by the Prime Minister of Italy to head a special committee aimed at curtailing the influence of organized crime. Although his work as a prosecutor is commendable alone, his dedication and doggedness at tremendous personal risk are herculean.

In 2013 Gratteri co-wrote the book, Acqua Santissima (published by Mondadori) with historian Antonio Nicaso, exposing the dense relationship of the church and the ‘Ndrangheta, which may have spurred the present Pope into making his most recent declaration of excommunication of members of the Mafia.

Recent News of Past Winners

Denis Mukwege

In June 2014, Dr. Denis Mukwege participated in a global summit on sexual violence in London. Reuters reported that Mukwege met with British Prime Minister David Cameron and said he had only one message to give: that the international community must establish a red line for the use of rape in war in the same way it had done for the use of chemical weapons.” He also stated that a new word should be found to replace “rape” because “it did not convey the comprehensive destruction caused by war-time sexual violence.” The four-day London summit committed to harnessing the pledges made by 150 governments who have backed the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict. In February 2014, Mukwege appeared before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee with the actor and director Ben Affleck who has created the Eastern Congo Initiative, a grant-making and advocacy organization investing in and working with the people of eastern Congo, inspired in part by Dr. Mukwege’s work.

Mukwege, who Affleck described as “legendary” and “one of the bravest people I have ever known,” did not testify, but helped to draft the statement that was submitted.

Rafael Marques De Morais

Rafael Marques De Morais was awarded the 2014 Loeb Award for Business Journalism, which he won, together with Forbes writer Kerry Dolan, for their reporting on the financial dealings of Isabel dos Santos, the eldest daughter of the president of Angola. Dolan reports that their article detailed their research that the billions of dollars amassed by Dos Santos were allegedly created by the “kleptocratic transfers” of her father. When asked by Dolan why he keeps “risking jail time and possibly his life”, Marques answered that he is doing it for the good of his country and fellow Angolans. Marques also received the Luxembourg Magazine award for Personality of the Year, for last year. The magazine highlighted the “enormous influence on Angolan issues he has demonstrated inside and outside the country,” and spoke of his commitment to transparency and activism. In a ceremony in Germany, Transparency International awarded Marques their 2013 Integrity Award for his work against corruption in Angola and his detailing of the creation of shell companies and money laundering among the elite of the country. At the beginning of the summer, as predicted, Marques was indicted by the Court of Common Crimes in Angola for defamation and libel for his article on Ms. Dos Santos.

Emmadeddin Baghi

Emmadeddin Baghi, one of Iran’s most respected activists, wrote an open letter to French President Francois Hollande, criticizing France’s stance in the nuclear talks in Geneva. Baghi claims that France’s tough position played into the hands of hardliners in Iran and undermined the work of human rights campaigners, who were hurt by international sanctions. Baghi wrote: “In my capacity as a human rights activist, I would like to urge you to reconsider your government’s decision to prevent the initiation of a first step in the world’s process of building confidence in the peacefulness of Iran’s nuclear program and the eventual ending of economic, technical, and scientific sanctions against Iran.” He went on to state: “You may not see a direct connection between those nuclear talks and the concerns of a human rights activist. But from my viewpoint and the point of view of many other activists in Iran, the continuation and extension of sanctions are causing the most egregious violations of human and citizen rights in Iran.” He warned that “France’s decision to block the conciliatory efforts of the new Iranian government...will also unwillingly smooth the path for the unwritten alliance of extremist and authoritarian forces inside Iran and external radical forces bent on destabilizing the country.”
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2012 Yu Jie  Author and advocate for reform in China
2011 Triveni Acharya  Defender of women and children in India
2010 Andrew White  Straightforward advocate for peace in the Middle East
2009 Amira Adbel Fattah  Champion of the non-violent campaign for self-determination in Western Sahara
2008 Ali Salem  Egyptian author and journalist. Voice for peace and reason in the Middle East
2007 Philip Buck  Impersonated in China for guiding North Korean refugees in their escape to freedom
2006 Rafael Marques de Morais  Journalist who exposed the slaughter of children and the plundering of natural assets

2005 Min Ko Naing  Long-term campaigner for democracy in Burma
2004 Anna Politkovskaya  Fearless reporter on atrocities in Chechnya, assassinated
2003 Emaduddin Baghi  Impressed for exposing assassinations of Iranian intellectuals
2002 Vladimir Roa  Anticoup, Champion of freedom, Cuba
2001 Gustavo Arcos  burgemeester of a pirate neighborhood

2000 Natasza Kantie  Persecuted journalist and activist, Belgrade
2009 Sergei Khodorkovich  (Honorable Mention) Solzhenitsyn Collaborator exiled to hard labor in Siberia
2008 Mstislav Rostropovich  (Honorable Mention) Founder of the National Philharmonic of Belarus
2007 Zdenko Ursak  Defender of victims of violence in the Dobrudja region of Romania
2006 Brigitte Lahaie  Author and advocate for women’s rights

2005 Paul Kamara  Editor and journalist fighting tyranny in Sierra Leone
2004 John Demjanjuk  Convicted Nazi death camp guard
2003 Mikhail Khodorkovsky  Founder of Yukos
2002 Rosemary Nelson†  Civil rights lawyer, assassinated
2001 George W. Bush  (Honorable Mention) President of the US
2000 Vaclav Havel  Anti-communist, playwright, President of the Czech Republic

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