

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

News Flash

AI Index: ORG 10/006/2003 (Public)
News Service No: 233
10 October 2003

Nobel Peace Prize: Important recognition of human rights defenders

Amnesty International today welcomed the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Shirin Ebadi for her outstanding contribution to human rights.

"By honouring Shirin the Norwegian Nobel Committee has recognized the critical importance of human rights and the individuals who defend them around the world," Amnesty International said.

Shirin has fought for many human rights defenders, including Amnesty International Prisoners of Conscience and this award pays homage to her and all the others who battle against injustice.

"Coming at a time when human rights principles are increasingly under threat this award will bring renewed hope for those engaged in the daily fight to uphold human rights," the organisation added.

Background

Shirin Ebadi, an advocate of women's and other human rights, has defended many victims of human rights violations. In 2000 Shirin defended Mehrangiz Kar and Shahla Lahiji, both prisoners of conscience, fighting for women's rights in Iran.

Shirin Ebadi has also investigated the murders of writers and intellectuals in 1998 and 1999. She was herself arrested on June 27 2000 accused of producing and distributing a video cassette which allegedly "disturbed public opinion".

Amnesty International has repeatedly called on the Iranian authorities for reforms which guarantee the true independence of the judiciary, so that human rights defenders are protected while those who have enjoyed impunity are brought to justice.

Public Document

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