



Press Release

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Russian Human Rights Defender Svetlana Gannushkina Announced as a 2016 Right Livelihood Award Laureate

A leading figure of the human rights movement in Russia today, Svetlana Gannushkina, has been announced as a Laureate of the 2016 [Right Livelihood Award](#).

Gannushkina receives this award *'for her decades-long commitment promoting human rights and justice for refugees, forced migrants, and different ethnic groups'*.

Through the organisation that she founded and heads – the Civic Assistance Committee – Gannushkina has provided free legal support, humanitarian aid and education to over 50,000 migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons since 1990.

She has also been outspoken in drawing public attention to human rights violations in conflict regions, notably the Caucasus. Gannushkina recently ran for the State Duma in Chechnya as a member of Yabloko, though she refused to campaign in the region, citing threats to her supporters. In 2015, the Civic Assistance Committee was designated a “foreign agent” by Russia’s Ministry of Justice under the 2012 foreign agent law.

The announcement was made today in Stockholm by Ole von Uexkull, Executive Director, and Marianne Andersson, Board Member of the Right Livelihood Award Foundation. The decision was made by an international Jury that had considered 125 nominations from 50 countries.

Ole von Uexkull commented: “Svetlana Gannushkina is not only an outstanding human rights advocate but also a person of immense personal integrity who has fought injustice and indifference her whole life. At a time when xenophobia and intolerance is on the rise in many countries around the world, Gannushkina is an inspiring example of the best in human nature.”

Her personal courage and successful advocacy in the Russian courts and the European Court of Human Rights has prevented the forced repatriation of migrants from Russia to Central Asian countries where they would have almost certainly been subject to imprisonment and torture.



As a member of the Russian Presidential Human Rights Council from 2002-2012, Gannushkina successfully advocated for the law on citizenship to be amended, allowing for over two million persons to be granted Russian citizenship.

Passionate about the transformative power of education, Gannushkina has brought repeated challenges to the Russian Supreme Court to grant all children in Russia, including migrants and refugees, the right to attend public schools.

Svetlana Gannushkina said: "This award is a great honour and a show of solidarity for me and my colleagues working with migrants and refugees. Sadly, only a very small number of refugees are welcomed in Russia today, and migrants' rights are routinely violated. Therefore, those who volunteer to help people seeking our support and goodwill carry an even greater responsibility. Thanks to the award money we will be able to provide food, shelter and medical help to those who need it most."

Established in 1980, the Right Livelihood Award honours and supports courageous people and organisations offering visionary and exemplary solutions to the root causes of global problems. It has become widely known as the 'Alternative Nobel Prize' and there are now 166 Laureates from 68 countries.

In addition to presenting the annual award, the Right Livelihood Award Foundation also supports the work of its Laureates, particularly those whose lives may be in danger due to the nature of their activities.

Svetlana Gannushkina receives a cash award of SEK 750,000 (ca. EUR 80,000).

Gannushkina is the fourth Right Livelihood Award Laureate from Russia, after Memorial (2004), the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers (1996) and Alla Yaroshinskaya (1992).

Gannushkina shares this year's Right Livelihood Award with Syria Civil Defence (also known as The White Helmets), Egypt's Mozn Hassan and her organisation Nazra for Feminist Studies, and Turkish independent newspaper Cumhuriyet.

If you would be interested in interviewing Svetlana Gannushkina or a representative of the Right Livelihood Award Foundation, please contact:

Xenya Cherny-Scanlon, Director of Communications, Right Livelihood Award, mobile: +41 76 690 8798, e-mail xenya@rightlivelihood.org

High-quality photo and video materials are available from: www.rightlivelihood.org/2016
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