



PRESS RELEASE

Freiburg, 07.03.2017 Page 1 of 2

Sixth International Convention of Environmental Laureates in Freiburg

Call of the Environmental Laureates: “Stop the persecution of environmental activists”

In the course of the 6th International Convention of Environmental Laureates, held in Freiburg from March 9 to 12, 100 environmental laureates from more than 40 nations will present a call to stop the persecution of environmental activists. The “Call to End Repression” is addressed to the governments around the globe to end the political persecution of environmental activists worldwide: “We, winners of some of the world’s most prestigious environmental awards, call on governments to immediately halt the harassment, attacks and threats against environmental activists and organizations and to guarantee that they can fully exercise their rights under domestic, international and human rights laws, including the essential freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly.”

The report “On Dangerous Ground” by the NGO Global Witness, which is based in London and Washington D.C., stated that there had been 185 killings of environmental activists around the world in 2015. This is the highest figure since the non-governmental organization began to collect data on how many environmental activists are murdered each year. In Brazil, the Philippines, Colombia, Peru, Nicaragua, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Honduras, environmental activists are being persecuted, amongst others, by paramilitary groups, the army and the police. Some participants of the 6th International Convention of Environmental Laureates are also being persecuted for their commitment in their home countries.

Golden Misabiko, laureate of the “Nuclear-Free Future Award”, sees the environmental convention as an opportunity to exchange ideas with other environmental activists and draw attention to the illegal uranium mining in Congo. The internationally known human

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PRESS RELEASE

Freiburg, 07.03.2017 Page 2 of 2

rights activist revealed in 2000 that the former government of the Democratic Republic of Congo had eight alleged rebels executed without trial. Misabiko was then imprisoned, tortured, and partly held in isolation for seven months. Following this, he went into exile to Sweden for two years. After his return to Congo he was again threatened, tortured and arrested. However, all these intimidation attempts did not prevent him from publishing a report on illegal uranium mining in five mines in 2009. The report also revealed the involvement of politicians and military personnel. Misabiko was arrested again. Amnesty International put his case on the “Urgent Action” list and on August 25 in 2009 Misabiko was released on bail and was able to leave for South Africa.

Tsetsegee Munkhbayar, founder of the “United Movement of Mongolian Rivers and Lakes” and winner of the “Goldman Environmental Prize”, will participate for the first time in the environmental convention. He had to serve a two-year term of imprisonment for his commitment to protect the waters in Mongolia from the dehydration and pollution caused by gold and copper mines.

Oleg Bodrov, former chairman of the NGO Green World and laureate of the “Nuclear Free Future Award”, was also prosecuted by authorities in his home country for his environmental activities. In 2015, his NGO had to pay a fine to the Russian Ministry of Justice because he

About the International Convention of Environmental Laureates in Freiburg:

Since 2012, the International Convention of Environmental Laureates has been held in Freiburg under the patronage of Professor Klaus Töpfer. More than 100 environmental laureates from more than 40 nations participate each year. In addition to internal events, there are also several public programme parts. The 6th International Convention of Environmental Laureates takes place from 9-12 March 2017. More information on www.european-environment-foundation.eu.

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