



MARTIN ENNALS AWARD FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

• Martin Ennals Foundation

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release: Geneva, 6 November 2007

Asma Jahangir, Laureate Martin Ennals Award, under house arrest in Pakistan

It is with the deepest concern that the Jury of the Martin Annals Award for Human Rights Defenders (MEA) has learned that its 1995 Laureate, Ms Asma Jahangir, has been put under house arrest for 90 days, as from the 3rd of November 2007.

The grounds for this detention order (SO (IS-I)3 – 34 /200/ - issued by the Home Department of the Government of Punjab) are totally spurious and unsubstantiated (e.g. that she “will deliver inflammatory speeches”). A similar fate awaits her sister, Hina Jilani, who is Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Human Rights Defenders, when she returns from an overseas trip.

The fact that many other progressive lawyers and judges have been targeted with such orders or even imprisoned, shows that this is a purely political move by the Pakistani Government.

Ms Jahangir is a leading human rights lawyer in Pakistan, and recognized as such by many international organizations. In 1998 the United Nations nominated her as Special Rapporteur on extra judicial executions and in 2004 on freedom of religion or belief. She is not only a Laureate of the MEA but also one of the Patrons.

The 10 international NGOs on the Jury of the MEA – as well as the Patrons of the MEA – demand the immediate lifting of the house arrest of Ms Jahangir.

A unique collaboration among 10 of the world's leading human rights organizations makes the MEA the main prize of the whole movement. The **JURY** is composed of the following: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Human Rights First, International Federation for Human Rights, World Organization Against Torture, International Commission of Jurists, German Diakonie, International Service for Human Rights, Front Line and HURIDOCS.

Patrons of the Martin Ennals Award are: Asma Jahangir, Barbara Hendricks, José Ramos-Horta, Adama Dieng, Leandro Despouy, Robert Fulghum, Theo van Boven and Werner Lottje†.

The **previous laureates** are: Pierre Claver Mbonimpa, Burundi, and Rajan Hoole & Kopalasingham Sritharan, Sri Lanka (2007) ; Akbar Ganji, Iran and Arnold Tsunga, Zimbabwe (2006); Aktham Naisse, Syria; Lida Yusupova, Russia; Alirio Uribe Muñoz, Colombia; Jacqueline Moudeina, Chad; Peace Brigades International; Immaculée Birhaheka, DR Congo; Natasa Kandic, Yugoslavia; Eyad El Sarraj, Palestine; Samuel Ruiz García, Mexico; Clement Nwankwo, Nigeria; Asma Jahangir, Pakistan; Harry Wu, China (1994).

*For further **information**, please contact Luis Marreiros, Coordinator MEA/MEF
Tel. +41 22 809 4925 marreiros@martinennalsaward.org / www.martinennalsaward.org*