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**EDELSTAM PRIZE LAUREATE 2012, BAHAREH HEDAYAT, HAS BEEN RELEASED FROM THE EVIN PRISON IN IRAN**

**The Edelstam Prize Laureate 2012, Mrs. Bahareh Hedayat, sentenced to ten years of punitive imprisonment in the Evin prison in 2009, has been released. She was charged with “propaganda against the regime” for her interviews with the foreign press; for insulting the Leader (a sentence called Vali Faqih); for insulting the President; for acting against national security by participating in social and public gathering and for helping organize group protest, such as a peaceful women’s protest for equal rights."**

**Link to film about Bahareh Hedayat:** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64DfGv95m0M**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64DfGv95m0M)

Bahareh was awarded with the Edelstam Prize 2012 for outstanding contributions and exceptional courage in standing up for one’s beliefs in the defense of Human Rights. Thereafter, Amnesty International listed her as a prisoner of conscience and has consistently advocated for her unconditional release. For extended periods of time she has been deprived of her basic rights, such as the right to have a lawyer, telephone conversations with her family, or meeting with visitors. On June 14, 2016, the United Nation’s Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued an opinion demanding Hedayat's immediate release, as her imprisonment since 2009 being arbitrary and against international law. She was finally released on September 12, 2016.

- “Asking for freedom links us together, you bring me hope and I grant you hope,” says Mrs. Bahareh Hedayat.

Bahareh has been under extreme pressure from the [Iranian] security forces as well as the judiciary to petition for forgiveness and amnesty by expressing regret about her past activities and positions. She has bravely refused to accept this precondition for her release. She has from the beginning requested the case to be considered by an unbiased court. However, she was finally released due to pressure from the international community;

-“We hope Bahareh soon can come and collect her prize. The Iranian government’s treatment of Bahareh and hundreds more political prisoners is outrageous and shameful. Bahareh was imprisoned for nothing more than peaceful activism for the rights of students and women. While in prison in 2011, she was given an extra six months for writing a letter about the conditions of other student activists,” says Caroline Edelstam, President of the Edelstam Foundation.

**The Edelstam Prize**

The Edelstam Prize is a Sweden-based international monetary award, administrated by the Harald Edelstam Foundation. The Edelstam Prize is awarded for outstanding contributions and exceptional courage in standing up for one’s beliefs in the Defence of Human Rights. The next prize will be awarded on November 15, 2016.

The Edelstam Prize is named after, and awarded in the memory of, the Swedish diplomat and Ambassador, Harald Edelstam (1913-1989). Harald Edelstam distinguished himself as diplomat by his professional competence, his bravery and his civic courage in the fight for Human Rights. He was an early proponent and symbol of what is today known as the ”Responsibility to Protect” and his memorable acts contributed to save more than a thousand lives.

The winner of the Edelstam Prize can be a private person or a person who serves in Government, international or national organisations. The winner shall be an individual who has acted in Ambassador Harald Edelstam’s spirit in a country/countries where Human Rights, according to international law, have been violated. The laureate must have shown outstanding capabilities in analysing and handling complex situations and in finding ways, even unconventional and creative ones, to defend Human Rights. The candidate has, presumably in a complex situation, been able to take a decisive role in helping threatened people or directly saving human lives. Civic courage is a central parameter in the selection of the successful candidate.

**The Jury**

The international jury is chaired by **Caroline Edelstam**, Harald Edelstam’s granddaughter and co-founder of the Edelstam Foundation. Other members of the Jury are Judge S**hirin Ebadi**, Nobel Peace Prize Winner in 2003, Dr. **Pascoal Mocumbi**, former Prime Minister of Mozambique (1994-2004), Professor **Philip Alston**, UN’s Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, former Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Dr. **Luis Moreno-Ocampo**, and former Judge **Baltasar Garzón**, who served on Spain’s Criminal Chamber of the National Court of Spain who is consistently fighting for Human Rights. Baltasar Garzón is most famous for indicting the Chilean dictator, General Augusto Pinochet for the deaths and torture of thousands of victims from Chile and other countries.

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