

Human Rights First Press Release www.humanrightsfirst.org

Krista Minter (212) 845-5207 / MinterK@humanrightsfirst.org

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Exceptional Uzbek Woman to Be Honored in Geneva on 20 November

GENEVA – **Mutabar TADJIBAEVA**, released from prison on the 2nd of June and for the first time allowed to travel abroad, will receive the 2008 Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders (MEA) on **Thursday 20th November**, 18h00, during an international ceremony in Geneva at the prestigious Musée Ariana. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights will present the award and opera star Barbara Hendricks will perform. This year's event is covered by **Swiss Television** for the **EBU** (European Broadcasting Union) which will broadcast a news flash on Euronews.

The program includes **exclusive film** images and a roundtable with experts on Uzbekistan. The event is co-organised with the **Municipality of Geneva** which wants to commemorate in this way the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Mutabar Tadjibaeva is a very courageous woman who has long helped ordinary people to find justice, monitored trials and made findings public. She was sentenced to 8 years in prison for her outspoken criticism of the Government over the 2005 massacre of Andijan, where hundreds unarmed civilians were killed and wounded. She was released on strict conditions but refuses to be silenced.

Uzbekistan will be under examination under the UPR (Universal Periodic Review) of the UN Human Rights Council next month. In this context, the Chairman of the Jury of the MEA, Hans Thoolen, draws the attention of the international community to her dramatic past and present situation, and encourages Uzbekistan to continue its reforms and to release all human rights defenders still in prison.

A unique collaboration among 10 of the world's leading human rights organizations makes the MEA the prize of the **whole** human rights movement. The **JURY** is composed of the following NGOs: *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: Louise Arbour, Asma Jahangir, José Ramos-Horta, Theo van Boven, Adama Dieng, Leandro Despouy, Barbara Hendricks, Robert Fulghum, and Werner Lottje†.

The **previous laureates**: Rajan Hoole-Kopalasingham Sriharan, Sri Lanka and Pierre Claver Mbonimpa, Burundi (2007); Akbar Ganji, Iran and Arnold Tsunga, Zimbabwe; 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).

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Human Rights First is a leading human rights advocacy organization based in New York City and Washington, D.C. Since 1978, we have worked in the United States and abroad to create a secure and humane world—advancing justice, human

dignity, and respect for the rule of law. All of our activities are supported by private contributions. We accept no government funds. Visit our website: www.humanrightsfirst.org

Human Rights First
333 Seventh Ave., 13th Flr, New York, NY 10001
Tel: (212) 845-5200 Fax: (212) 845-5299
www.humanrightsfirst.org