



NIWANO
PEACE FOUNDATION

Shamvilla Catherina 5F, 1-16-9 Shinjuku,
Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160-0022, Japan
Phone: 81-3-3226-4371 Fax: 81-3-3226-1835
URL: <http://www.npf.or.jp/> E-mail: info@npf.or.jp

PRESS RELEASE

February 18, 2025

Musawah to receive the Niwano Peace Prize

The 42nd Niwano Peace Prize shall be awarded to Musawah in recognition of its immense efforts to strengthen citizenship and peaceful coexistence in diverse societies, and to create contexts and platforms for interfaith dialogue and spiritual solidarity. It is addressing the gender biased socio-economic, legal and political discrimination in human history. Its goal is to uncover the voices of women that have long been silenced in cultural and religious societies. Its international network includes hundreds of advocates from Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the Global North in over 40 countries, who are campaigning for positive changes in attitudes, practices, laws, and policies to support the human rights of women and girls in Muslim countries. The Niwano Peace Foundation honors Musawah's dedication to empowering women's leadership in social, legal, and spiritual activism, advancing civic engagement, human rights, and peace.

The presentation ceremony will take place in Tokyo, Japan, on Wednesday, May 14, 2025. In addition to an award certificate, Musawah will receive a medal and twenty million yen.

To avoid undue emphasis on any particular religion or region, every year the Peace Foundation solicits nominations from people of recognized intellectual and religious stature around the world. In the nomination process, some hundreds of designated nominators and organizations throughout the world from many religions and academics across the globe are asked to propose candidates. Nominees are rigorously screened by the Niwano Peace Prize Committee, which presently consists of nine religious leaders from diverse geographical areas, all of whom are involved in movements for peace and inter-religious cooperation.

Here are some impressions of Musawah from members of the committee responsible for selecting this year's recipient:

- The Musawah movement, founded in 2009, is one of the most important contributors in the development of the referred dialogue and must be considered for the award. The dialogue between the great values of democracy and the historical religious-cultural traditions is a great challenge in our present and could be decisive in the building of the coming world.
- The effectiveness of Musawah's method of action: the idea that in order to achieve global peace one must start with peace in the family is absolutely shareable. ... The movement's efforts to demonstrate that "equality and justice in the Muslim family are necessary and possible" on the basis of Quranic doctrine is to be admired; Musawah carries out its action in a very rational and wise way by accompanying the study of the issue with practice and having as its goal a normative framework without which there is no possibility of change in society; very important is the commitment at the international level: the support of a global women movement and of International Organizations is

indispensable for the achievement of the goal Musawah has set. ... [T]he positive approach -showing the justice and beauty of Islamic marriage ... is a path that has serious chances of achieving positive results.

- Musawah have taken a very bold step in challenging the patriarchal nature of their religion... . Though they are aware of the possible outcomes of such steps, as it happens to women in various religions, they have decided to come out of the cocoon and express their views regarding to equality. ... They believe that the unfairness and harm that comes from denigration of women within family relationships, to women, children, and the family more broadly, are linked in large measure to cultural interpretations of religious teachings. Musawah's orientation is spiritual in a highly practical sense, focusing on core religious values and teachings, then translating that understanding into analysis and activism to bring about changes in laws and in their practical implementation. Musawah recognizes that without redressing legal practices that perpetuate inequality (in, for example divorce and custody, response to violence) harmful practices and structural social violence cannot change.
This initiative of Musawah is a foundation and a lesson to be learnt by many women in other religions and also changing the lenses in the interpretation of scriptures and religious history.
- Musawah's faith-based human rights approach to advocacy for equality uses strategies such as re-interpreting religious texts, addressing legal practices as well as building knowledge and capacity through training and education to empower women, and allies across society who are committed to furthering the cause of gender equality, justice, and fairness. They are driven by a strong sense of values and Islamic principles, and work with the notion that addressing the structural and contextual injustices in the lived realities of people using faith concepts is not only a way of bearing witness to the justice that faith advocates for, but also necessary for a healthy and wholesome spiritual, religious and practical life.

The Niwano Peace Prize

The Niwano Peace Foundation established the Niwano Peace Prize to honor and encourage individuals and organizations that have contributed significantly to inter-religious cooperation, thereby furthering the cause of world peace, and to make their achievements known as widely as possible. The Foundation hopes in this way both to enhance inter-religious understanding and cooperation and to encourage the emergence of still more persons devoted to working for world peace.

The Prize is named in honor of the founder of this foundation, Nikkyo Niwano, also the first president of the lay Buddhist organization Rissho Kosei-kai. For Niwano, peace was not merely an absence of conflict among nations, but a dynamic harmony in the inner lives of people as well as in our communities, nations, and the world. Seeing peace as the goal of Buddhism, Niwano devoted much of the latter half of his life to promoting world peace, especially through inter-religious discussion and cooperation.

Niwano Peace Prize recipients are:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Archbishop Hélder P. Câmara (1983) | 13. Ms. Marii K. Hasegawa (1996) |
| 2. Dr. Homer A. Jack (1984) | 14. The Corrymeela Community (1997) |
| 3. Mr. Zhao Puchu (1985) | 15. Ven. Maha Ghosananda (1998) |
| 4. Dr. Philip A. Potter (1986) | 16. The Community of Sant'Egidio (1999) |
| 5. The World Muslim Congress (1987) | 17. Dr. Kang Won Yong (2000) |
| 6. Rev. Etai Yamada (1989) | 18. Rev. Abuna Elias Chacour (2001) |
| 7. Mr. Norman Cousins (1990) | 19. Rev. Samuel Ruiz García (2002) |
| 8. Dr. Hildegard Goss-Mayr (1991) | 20. Dr. Priscilla Elworthy (2003) |
| 9. Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne (1992) | 21. The Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative (2004) |
| 10. Neve Shalom / Wahat al-Salam (1993) | 22. Dr. Hans Küng (2005) |
| 11. Paulo Evaristo Cardinal Arns (1994) | 23. Rabbis for Human Rights (2006) |
| 12. Dr. M. Aram (1995) | |

24. Dharma Master Cheng Yen (2007)
25. His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal (2008)
26. Rev. Canon Gideon Baguma Byamugisha (2009)
27. Ms. Ela Ramesh Bhatt (2010)
28. Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa (2011)
29. Ms. Rosalina Tuyuc Velásquez (2012)
30. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Gunnar Stålsett (2013)
31. Ms. Dena Merriam (2014)
32. Pastor Esther Abimiku Ibanga (2015)
33. Centre for Peace Building and Reconciliation (2016)
34. Bishop Dr. Munib A. Younan (2017)
35. Adyan Foundation (2018)
36. Dr. John Paul Lederach (2019)
37. Venerable Pomnyun (2020)
38. Venerable Shih Chao-hwei (2021)
39. Father Michael Lapsley, SSM (2022)
40. Mr. Rajagopal P. V. (2023)
41. Prof. Mohammed Abu-Nimer (2024)

The Niwano Peace Foundation

The Niwano Peace Foundation was chartered in 1978 with the aim of contributing to the realization of world peace and enhancing a culture of peace. The foundation promotes research and other activities based on the spirit of religious principles and serves the cause of peace in such fields as education, science, religion, and philosophy. The Foundation's assets, totaling approximately 4.7 billion yen, enable the Niwano Peace Prize as well as other activities such as grants, research projects, lectures, symposia, and international exchanges. The Niwano Peace Foundation is a government-recognized charitable organization.

For further information please contact Mr. Shogo Nakano / Ms. Natsuki Kudo / Ms. Aina Hirano at the Niwano Peace Foundation.

Tel: +81-3-3226-4371 Fax: +81-3-3226-1835

E-mail: npp_program@npf.or.jp URL: www.npf.or.jp/english/