



Parliamentarians for Global Action

Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) Announces Recipients of the 2004 Defender of Democracy Awards

For Immediate Release

NEW YORK, September 17, 2004 – Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) will present the 2004 Defender of Democracy Awards to Rt. Hon. Helen Clark, Prime Minister of New Zealand, and Ms. Teesta Setalvad, human rights activist in India, on December 6, 2004 at PGA's 26th Annual Forum in Wellington, New Zealand.

Since 1996, PGA has held its annual Defender of Democracy Awards in conjunction with its Annual Parliamentary Forum. The Defender of Democracy Award honors those individuals who have defended the principles of peace, democracy and justice around the world.

This year marks the 20th Anniversary of the Six Nation Peace Initiative on nuclear disarmament, an issue Hon. Clark has dynamically addressed throughout her political career. Since 1981, Hon. Clark has remained an active member of the New Zealand Parliament and member of PGA, working particularly on nuclear free issues. She has held numerous parliamentary posts such as Chair of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Select Committee and Chair of the ad hoc Disarmament and Arms Control Select Committee. Hon. Clark has also served as Minister for Conservation; Housing; Health; and Labour. In 1989, she became Deputy Prime Minister and in 1999 was elected Prime Minister. As weapons of mass destruction and the dangers they pose continue to be relevant, PGA honors the work of Hon. Clark towards a nuclear-free world.

Ms. Setalvad, editor of *Communalism Combat*, founded Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP), an NGO composed of non-political concerned citizens. CJP was formed in Mumbai on March 31, 2002 in response to the massacre of 2000 people in Gujarat which took place in March 2002. In June 2003, the Gujarat High Court acquitted all 21 people accused of burning alive 14 people in a bakery in Baroda. This became known as the Best Bakery Case. Ms. Setalvad, through CJP, fought to get a fair trial for victims of the massacres and persuaded witnesses to come forward through a witness protection program. In April 2004, she successfully convinced the Supreme Court to reopen the case and transfer the trial to Maharashtra. This has been heralded as a positive move for the rule of law and an important step in preserving the secular democracy of India.

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