



Parliamentarians for Global Action

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Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) Announces Recipients of the 14th Annual Defender of Democracy Awards

NEW YORK, 18 May 2009 - Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) will present the 2009 Defender of Democracy Awards to **Mr. Kailash Satyarthi** of India, Founder/Chair of the Global March Against Child Labor, and **Ch. Aitzaz Ahsan** of Pakistan, Barrister-at-Law, Senior Advocate Supreme Court. The awards ceremony will take place on the evening of **October 20th, 2009** at the **United States Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.** in conjunction with PGA's 31st Annual Parliamentary Forum which is being hosted at the US Congress by PGA's International Councilor, Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and its congressional members, Rep. Jim McDermott (D-Washington), Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-New York) among others. For details please see PGA's Forum website: <http://www.pgaction.org/PGAs31stAnnualForum.html>.

Since 1996, PGA has held the Defender of Democracy Awards in conjunction with its Annual Parliamentary Forum. The Defender of Democracy Award is presented to individuals who, through their own commitment and active engagement, have made significant progress in strengthening democracy and democratic practices. Some past recipients include H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia, Ms. Mary Robinson, former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, former Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Afghanistan.

PGA is honoring Mr. Satyarthi for his distinguished life-long work and commitment to end child labor in India and around the world and his global campaign for education rights for children. For nearly three decades, Mr. Satyarthi has campaigned courageously to end child labor in his own country and around the world, rescuing more than 67,000 bonded laborers, including more than 40,000 children. He is the founder/chair of the Global March Against Child Labor, and creator of the Rugmark label, the universally recognized symbol of rugs certified as having been made without the use of exploitative child labor. Since September 2008, Mr. Satyarthi has been leading an effort under the Global Campaign for Education for children by 2015. Mr. Satyarthi also launched the Global March's "World Cup Campaign" convincing the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) to agree to the elimination of child labor in the manufacture of soccer balls.

Mr. Ahsan is being honored by PGA for his distinguished life-long career as a constitutional law and human rights expert and former Minister and parliamentarian who has defended political prisoners from all parties in Pakistan. Mr. Ahsan accompanied President Kim Dae Jung of Korea and Dr. Kamal Hussain former Foreign Minister of Bangladesh to the United Nations to elaborate and advance the cause of democracy in Burma on behalf of Nobel Laureate Madam Aung Sung Suu Kyi and the Forum for the Democratic Leaders of Asia-Pacific. Mr. Ahsan is one of Pakistan's leading constitutional and human rights attorneys. Educated at Cambridge University, called to the Bar at Gray's Inn, Mr. Ahsan has defended scores of political prisoners in military court trials including both former Prime Ministers - Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, lead counsel for Ms. Mukhtar Mai, gang-rape victim of village council "justice" whose resistance became a national and international cause celebre. He has most recently been the defense counsel for the Chief Justice of Pakistan while serving as Supreme Court Bar Association President. In a parallel political career, Mr. Ahsan served as Member of Parliament, provincial and national, 1976-2007; Minister for Law and Justice; Minister of Interior and Minister of Education.