



Parliamentarians for Global Action

Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) Announces Recipients of the 15th Annual Defender of Democracy Awards

NEW YORK, 20 September 2010 - Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) will present the 2010 Defender of Democracy Awards to: Prof. Dr. Feride Acar of Turkey, Professor, Middle East Technical University in Ankara, and Member (-elect) of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); and Ms. Belgica Mirabal (Doña Dedé) of the Dominican Republic, Chairwoman of the Hermanas Mirabal Foundation. The awards ceremony will take place on the evening of October 23rd, 2010 in Istanbul, Turkey in conjunction with PGA's 32nd Annual Parliamentary Forum on Women's Empowerment – Building Human Security.

Since 1996, PGA has held the Defender of Democracy Awards in conjunction with its Annual 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. For further information, please visit PGA's website: http://pgaction.org/32nd_Annual_Forum.html.

PGA is honoring Prof. Dr. Acar for her distinguished work and lifelong commitment to women's rights in Turkey and around the world. Since 2001, Dr. Acar has been a professor at the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey. As an academic, she works on women's human rights, women's participation in professional life, and political sociology in both national and international areas. She has also taken part in the activities of many international organizations and institutions dedicated to women's empowerment. Dr. Acar was a member of the Council of Europe Task Force to Combat Violence Against Women (2006-2008) and the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as Chairperson (2003-2005), Vice-Chairperson (2001-2003), Rapporteur (1999-2001), and Member (1997-2005). Dr. Acar was a consultant/member on the Gender Advisory Panel for Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming at UNDP (February 2004 to May 2005). She was also a member and spokesperson for the Turkish delegation to the Ministerial Conference of Equality Ministers at the Council of Europe in Istanbul (1998), and a member of the Turkish delegation to the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing, China (1995).

Ms. Mirabal is being honored by PGA for her distinguished work and lifelong commitment to women's rights, the elimination of violence against women and her contributions to further democracy in the Dominican Republic. On November 25, 1960, her three sisters were assassinated for opposing the Trujillo dictatorship (1930-1961). The surviving Ms. Mirabal became active in politics and came to symbolize the struggle against violent dictatorships not only in the Dominican Republic but also in Latin America. Dedé Mirabal upheld her sisters' legacy by working tirelessly to establish a democratic society in her country. In the late 1960s/early 1970s, Dedé Mirabal decided to found a museum and library in the home where her three sisters were living at the moment they were killed. The Mirabal Sisters Museum preserved the history of the Trujillo regime, which the government refused to include in national history books. Today, the Museum is visited annually by thousands of students as well as by national and international visitors. At the age of 85, she continues to lead tours and to speak about the need for the Dominican Republic to strengthen its democratic institutions. In 1999, to honor the struggle of the Mirabal sisters against dictatorship and their tragic death, the UN General Assembly declared November 25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.