



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **2011 Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders winner is a gay rights activist from Uganda**

**The Jury of the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders (MEA), meeting in Geneva, selects **Kasha Jacqueline Nabagesera** as the Laureate for her work for LGBT rights and marginalised people in Uganda**

**Kasha Jacqueline Nabagesera**, a Ugandan woman, is the founder and Executive Director of Freedom and Roam Uganda, a main lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights organization. Kasha has had the courage to appear on national television in Uganda, she has issued press statements on behalf of the gay community, and spoke on several radio stations. Already in 2007 she was harassed at the World Social Forum in Nairobi, and on many occasions afterwards she was hackled, threatened and even attacked by people for appearing in the media. Since then she has been shifting from house to house, afraid to stay long in the same place. On 26 January 2011, one of her colleagues, gay activist David Kato, was murdered following the publication of a "gay list" by the Ugandan tabloid *Rolling Stone* calling for their hanging; in this black list Kasha Jacqueline's name also appears. The Chairman of the Jury of the MEA, Hans Thoolen, describes the laureate as "*an exceptional woman of a rare courage, fighting under death threat for human dignity and the rights of homosexuals and marginalised people in Africa*". With this award the Jury wants to underline its position against the discrimination of people based on gender or sexual orientation.

**The Ceremony** of the Martin Ennals Award will take place in the Victoria Hall of Geneva late in the year.

**The main award of the human rights movement.** The Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders (MEA) is a unique collaboration among ten of the world's leading human rights organisations to give **protection** to human rights defenders worldwide. The **Jury** is composed of the following NGOs: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Human Rights First, International Federation for Human Rights, World Organisation Against Torture, Front Line, International Commission of Jurists, German Diakonie, International Service for Human Rights and HURIDOCS.

**Previous laureates** : Muhannad Al-Hassani, Syria (2010), Emad Baghi, Iran; Mutabar Tadjibaeva, Uzbekistan; Pierre Claver Mbonimpa, Burundi and Rajan Hoole-Kopalasingham Sritharan, Sri Lanka; 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; Natasha Kandic, Yugoslavia; Eyad El Sarraj, Palestine; Samuel Ruiz, Mexico; Clement Nwankwo, Nigeria; Asma Jahangir, Pakistan; Harry Wu, China.

For downloadable **film images** on the Laureate of 2011, please go to <http://vimeo.com/23160035> - the Vimeo account of True Heroes with a password: **MEA\_KASHA\_2011**.

**Patrons** of the Martin Ennals Award: Asma Jahangir, Barbara Hendricks, José Ramos-Horta, Adama Dieng, Leandro Despouy, Louise Arbour, Robert Fulghum, Irene Khan, Theo van Boven and Werner Lottjet.

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