

The Arab NGO Network for Development Salutes a Colleague and one of its Founding Members, Mr. Raji Sourani, for Receiving an Alternative Nobel Prize

Beirut, December 3, 2013 - The Arab NGO Network for Development: Today, Mr. Raji Sourani, a colleague, Palestinian rights activist, head of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights' board of trustees, and head of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, received the Right Livelihood award, also known as the "alternative Nobel Prize". Raji Sourani was awarded this award in acknowledgement of his efforts and contribution to the victory of human rights on the Palestinian, Arab and international levels¹.

We, the Arab NGO Network for Development, salute our colleague for the well deserved award. Sourani's struggle, over the past decades to defend the Palestinian, Arab and people of the world rights is well-known. Sourani is the first Arab activist to receive such award.

Raji Sourani was born and raised in Gaza. He struggled for its liberation from the Israeli occupation. He exercised the profession of attorney to defend the rights of detained Palestinians. He himself was detained in 1985 and 1988 and is a member of the International Jurists Committee. Moreover, he also held the position of vice president of the International Federation for Human Rights for several years, before being elected president of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights. Furthermore, he was the founder and director of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights. He is known for his firm positions when it comes to defending the rights of the expelled and detained, and monitoring living conditions in Israeli jails and detaining centres, and he strongly opposes any violation of human rights wherever it takes place.

Bearing in mind the region's current situation, the fact that Raji Sourani obtained this international award is considered as an act of acknowledgement for all Arab activists who sacrificed everything they had so that the Arab social and human right movements can successfully oppose oppression, corruption and marginalisation, and defend human dignity, development and impose the respect of human rights. This award is also a clear message

¹ The Right Livelihood international foundation annually presents its award to honour prominent activists working in various humanitarian fields. The ceremony took place in the Stockholm's Parliament building and was attended by prominent members of Swedish and northern Europe parliaments, as well as selected members of international civil society organisations.

The award was established in 1980 by German-Swedish philanthropist and philatelist Jakob von Uexküll, after realising that the scope of the Nobel Prize is very narrow and serves the interests of industrialised countries, and that it was necessary to acknowledge those who work on directly confronting the challenges faced by their societies.

Jakob von Uexküll sold his valuable stamp collection to fund for the first award ceremony. The subsequent awards were funded by individual donors and their objective was to honour and support those who contribute to the world by offering practical and exemplary solutions to the urgent challenges.

intended for the international community and to worldwide human rights activists that democratic change and human rights defence throughout the Arab region are the result of a perseverant struggle undertaken by people who fought injustice and tyranny in all its forms. This award reflects the concomitance of fight against oppression and occupation across the Arab region with the fight for justice and equality and against all forms of exclusion across the globe.

Congratulations to you Mr Raji Sourani for this international acknowledgement of the important role you played and the sacrifices you made over the past three decades. It is an honour and a privilege to celebrate you as a pioneer and inspiring activist among us.

On behalf of all Arab NGO Network for Development activists, we salute Mr Raji Sourani and wish him to fulfil his dreams so that we may live in a world where peace, justice, safety and prosperity reign.