

PRESS RELEASE

Jorge Molano to receive Lawyers for Lawyers Award

AMSTERDAM, 1 May 2015 - Jorge Eliécer Molano Rodríguez, a Colombian Human Rights Lawyer and member of DHColombia¹, is selected to receive the Lawyers for Lawyers Award 2015. Jorge Molano will accept the award on 29 May at L4L's seminar² '*Lawyers are not their clients*', which is also organized to celebrate the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers³. It will be held at the offices of NautaDutilh (WTC) in Amsterdam.



Jury remarks

"The jury noted that among the nominees a shockingly large amount of lawyers are imprisoned for doing their work. In far too many countries human rights lawyers and their relatives live in constant danger. The jury found in Jorge Molano a lawyer who is standing out for his decennia long commitment to those who are not accepting the suppression by the often criminal and violent powers that be. By awarding Molano the jury wants to applaud his immense personal courage and stamina and draw attention to the largely overlooked dire human rights situation in Colombia".

Death threats

Jorge Molano is based in Bogota and works as an independent lawyer and legal advisor to several NGOs, including 'Sembrar'. Jorge Molano received numerous death threats in the course of his work as a lawyer and human rights defender. After the death threats in 2009 and 2010, he felt obliged to send his daughters to live abroad for security reasons. In January 2013 the Colombian State's National Protection Unit (NPU) defined Jorge Molano's risk level as "extraordinary," due to several security incidents. In 2014 Jorge Molano and other members of DHColombia and Sembrar have been the victim of several aggressions including attacks on family members, raids on his home to steal information, cyber-attacks on email and website accounts, telephone interception, and illegal surveillance, among others.

Current work: emblematic human rights cases

Currently, Jorge Molano represents victims in some of the most emblematic human rights cases in Colombia, such as the disappearance of 11 people after the dramatic events around the hostage-taking at the Palace of Justice in Bogota on 6 and 7 November 1985, and the killing on 21 February 2005 of several members (including minors) of the Comunidad de Paz of San José de Apartado, a group of villagers who have sworn not to become involved in the conflict in Colombia. Jorge Molano also provides legal support to persons in cases where organizations and human rights defenders are spied upon by national intelligence agencies, and in cases concerning extrajudicial executions.

¹ <http://www.dhcolombia.com/>

² <http://www.advocatenvooradvocaten.nl/wp-content/uploads/Save-the-date-final.pdf>

³ <http://www.advocatenvooradvocaten.nl/basic-principles/>

Second and third on shortlist

Human rights lawyers from across the world were nominated for the L4L Award. The expert jury (Ms Heikelien Verrijn Stuart, Mr Theo van Boven, Mr Egbert Myjer and Ms Els Swaab) selected Jorge Molano as the laureate. The Jury chose Khalil Maatouk⁴ from Syria and Pu Zhiqiang⁵ from China as second and third respectively.

Lawyers for Lawyers Award

The Lawyers for Lawyers award was created in 2011 by the Dutch Civil Society Organization Lawyers for Lawyers (L4L). L4L is an independent and non-political Dutch foundation which seeks to promote the proper functioning of the rule of law by pursuing freedom and independence of the legal profession. We do this by supporting lawyers worldwide who are threatened or suppressed in the execution of their profession, in conformity with international law, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers*.

In addition to it being a special memento, L4L hands out this Award every two years with the aim that the attention and publicity that comes with it will offer the recipient additional protection in the discharge of his/her professional duties.

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END PRESS RELEASE

Note for editors:

Lawyers for Lawyers is a non-profit organization that has committed itself to enable lawyers to practice law in freedom and independence, always and everywhere, even when that does not suit the local government, bar association or establishment. L4L provides support to oppressed lawyers and lawyers' organizations and organizes fact-finding missions and trial observations.

Donations are exclusively provided by individual lawyers, law firms and lawyers' organizations. At present, the Board of Directors consists of Phon van den Biesen, President (attorney, Van den Biesen Kloostra Advocaten), Joost Italianer, Secretary (attorney, NautaDutilh), Tony Vermeulen, Treasurer (attorney), Judith Lichtenberg (lawyer), Irma van den Berg (attorney, Six Legal), Robert Crince le Roy, (attorney, Van Ardenne en Crince le Roy Advocaten) and Bernadette Ficq (attorney, Blaauw Advocaten).

⁴ <http://www.advocatenvooradvocaten.nl/lawyers/khalil-maatouk/>

⁵ <http://www.advocatenvooradvocaten.nl/lawyers/pu-zhiqiang/>