

Beat: Politics

LOULAIN AL HATHLOUL WINNER OF THE LIBERTY PRIZE 2020 IN NORMANDIE

BY WORLD FORUM FOR PEACE NORMANDIE

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USPA NEWS - The online vote to choose the winner of the Prix Liberté 2020 ended on June 6. 5,493 young people from 81 countries voted. With 42.2% of the vote, Loujain Al Hathloul, Saudi activist for women's rights, was named winner of this second edition of the Prix Liberté. The two other finalists, Father Pedro Opeka, known for his fight against poverty in Madagascar, and Nasrin Sotoudeh, a prominent Iranian lawyer specializing in the defense of human rights and fundamental freedoms, obtained respectively 29, 3% and 25.3% of the vote (2.9% of blank votes). The family of Loujain Al Hathloul will be presented with a check for 25,000 euros to defend their cause as well as a trophy made by pupils of the Lycée Napoléon de L'Aigle during the third edition of the Normandy World Forum for Peace to be held October 1 and 2, 2020 at the Abbaye aux Dames in Caen.

"Time and time again, the fight for freedom is constantly and tirelessly defended. I am delighted that our youth have chosen Loujain Al Hathloul, a prominent Saudi defender of women's rights who has been behind bars for almost two years, winner of the Prix Liberté 2020. This young woman is an exceptional embodiment of this exemplary commitment to freedom" said Hervé Morin, President of the Normandy Region. "Loujain Al Hathloul, like Greta Thunberg in 2019, was the youngest of the Prix Liberté finalists. Is this what explains and explains the choice of the 5,500 young people who participated in the vote? I neither want nor can speak for them. But I see that this choice is coherent: from the parades against the climate crisis of last year to the mobilizations against racism and police violence following the terrible agony of Georges Floyd in Minneapolis, the world youth are on the front line to defend the universal values, first and foremost freedom. That she chooses to embody these mobilizations by rewarding the commitment of young activists seems to me to participate in the same idea: the youth wants a better world, she is ready to mobilize for this, she does not want her fight to be recovered, and she wants this to be known," said Emmanuel Davidenkoff, Deputy Editorial Director of Le Monde and Chairman of the Jury for the Prix Liberté 2020.

LOUJAIN AL HATHLOUL IS A SAUDI ACTIVIST FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS IMPRISONED FOR TWO YEARS -----

Loujain Al Hathloul is Born in 1989, a Saudi Arabian women's rights activist in her country. In 2014, she was arrested for the first time for trying to cross the border between the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia while driving a car. After 73 days in prison, she is released. Re-arrested in May 2018 for braving the ban on women driving in the kingdom, she has since been imprisoned. His family has stated on numerous occasions that Loujain was subjected to torture and sexual violence during his detention. After a mock trial in March 2019 (no lawyer, no clear charges), Loujain remains in prison. In August 2019, the Saudi prosecution offered to release her in exchange for testimony in which she must state that she had never been the victim of violence in detention, which she refuses. She is still in prison today.

The Prix Liberté, an educational project in 3 stages promoting the involvement of young people from one end to the other of the process The Prix Liberté is an initiative of the Normandy Region in partnership with the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace, the academic authorities of Normandy and Canopé. It allows young people from all countries, aged 15-25, to designate each year a person or an organization engaged in an exemplary fight for freedom.

THE 2020 EDITION WAS STRUCTURED AROUND AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN 3 MAIN STAGES-----

1) A call for proposals "Our Freedom 2020 Prize", launched on July 21, 2019, following the presentation of the Prize of the first edition to Greta Thunberg for her fight in favor of climate justice. It closed on January 17, 2020. 167 proposals, designating either a person or an organization, were received. They came from Burkina Faso, Canada, Colombia, the United States, Spain, France and Madagascar.

2) An international jury, composed of 24 young people of 13 different nationalities and chaired by Emmanuel Davidenkoff, Deputy Managing Editor of Le Monde, met on February 14 and 15, 2020 at the Abbaye-aux-Dames to nominate the 3 finalists: Loujain Al Hathloul, Father Pedro Opeka and Nasrin Sotoudeh

3) An online vote, open from March 9 to June 6, 2020, for young people aged 15 to 25, of any nationality. Nearly 5,500 entries from 81 different countries and 5 continents of the world were recorded. Throughout the process, the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace has also carried out educational actions with educational establishments in Normandy but also in Lyon and Bègles, in order to sensitize 700 young people to the concepts of freedom, commitment and citizenship.

The nomination of Loujain Al Hathloul was proposed by the young people of CIFAC and the Charles de Gaulle high school in Caen, two of the establishments which participated in the educational program implemented by the Institute.

THE TWO OTHER FINALISTS FOR THE 2020 FREEDOM PRIZE ARE :

FATHER PEDRO OPEKA(29.3% of the votes)-----

Born in 1948 in Argentina, Father Pedro Opeka visited Madagascar for the first time in 1970 before settling there as a priest from 1975. He made the fight against poverty his daily battle. In 1989, he created the Akamasoa association, "good friends" in Malagasy, to intensify his fight against precariousness. The association offers decent accommodation (3,000 houses spread across 22 villages) as well as decent paid work. Since its creation, more than 500,000 people have been supported by the association. Father Pedro travels the world to draw the attention of the international community to the situation in Madagascar and to raise funds so that his association can function in self-sufficiency.

NASRIN SOTOUDEH (25.3% of the votes)-----

Born in 1963 in Iran, Nasrin Sotoudeh is a prominent Iranian lawyer specializing in the defense of human rights and fundamental freedoms. She has defended opposition activists and politicians, as well as prisoners sentenced to the death penalty for crimes committed when they were minors. Arrested for the first time in 2010, she was sentenced to 11 years in prison and banned from practicing as a lawyer. Pardoned in 2013, she was arrested again in 2018 and sentenced to 38 years imprisonment and 148 lashes for defending the rights of women and protesting against the legislation which imposes the wearing of the hijab (veil) in Iran. Since then, the international community has tirelessly demanded his release. Source: Region of Normandie

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