



UNION INTERNATIONALE DES EDITEURS
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INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION
UNION INTERNACIONAL DE EDITORES

The First IPA Publishers' Freedom Prize goes to Courageous Female Iranian Publisher

Geneva (Switzerland), Göteborg (Sweden), 21 September, 2006:

During the opening ceremony of the Göteborg Book Fair today, Iranian publisher Shahla Lahiji is receiving the first IPA Publishers' Freedom Prize in recognition of her exemplary defense and promotion of freedom of expression and freedom to publish in her country and internationally.

The board of the International Publishers' Association (IPA) selected Shahla Lahiji as Prize-winner from among many highly commendable candidates, nominated by IPA members, individual publishers and human rights' organisations.

Lars Grahn, Chair of IPA's Freedom to Publish Committee, says: "Shahla Lahiji's work as a publisher and her wholehearted support of women's rights have often brought her into conflict with Iranian authorities and endangered her personal safety. Despite repeated death threats, Ms Lahiji has continued to courageously provide many authors with means to tell their story to the public, fighting against any opposition to freedom of expression or freedom to publish."

Ana Maria Cabanellas, President of IPA, declares: "We award this Prize to Shahla Lahiji in deep respect for her courage as a publisher and as a salute to the passion, the integrity, and the steadfastness that she so marvellously demonstrates".

More about Shahla Lahiji:

Born in 1942, Shahla Lahiji became the first woman publisher in Iran, where she founded her publishing house Roshangaran in 1983. Since then, she has published over 200 titles, many of them works by women. Ms Lahiji is also a writer and a translator. Her publishing activities were severely threatened and disrupted on many occasions: In 2000, Shahla Lahiji faced several months of imprisonment, accused of "acting against national security" following the delivery of a speech at a cultural conference in Berlin. In 2005, her publishing house was petrol-bombed by unknown assailants and many manuscripts were burnt. The day-to-day incidents aimed at obstructing her strive for freedom to publish are countless. However, even under these circumstances, Ms Lahiji continues to enthusiastically defend her ideals.

More about the IPA Publishers' Freedom Prize and the Göteborg Book Fair:

Created last year, the IPA Publishers' Freedom Prize is awarded for exemplary courage in upholding freedom of expression and freedom to publish. It is intended to honour, normally each year, a person, organisation or institution that has made a notable contribution to the defence and/or promotion of freedom to publish anywhere in the world. The prize-winner receives the sum of 5'000 CHF (approximately 3'000 EUR).

The IPA Publishers' Freedom Prize is being presented today during the opening ceremony of the Göteborg Book Fair by IPA President Ana Maria Cabanellas and IPA Freedom to Publish Committee Chair Lars Grahn. For more on this event which is focusing on freedom of expression this year with IPA as a main partner, please see: www.ipa-ue.org/freedom/freedom_pub/English_sempro.pdf, and www.goteborg-bookfair.com

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More about IPA:

IPA, established in Paris in 1896, represents the publishing industry worldwide through 78 national, regional and specialised publishers associations in 66 countries. It is an accredited NGO enjoying consultative status to the United Nations and seeking to promote and defend the fundamental freedoms to publish, to read and to write, defending the rights of authors and publishers to create and distribute intellectual works in complete freedom.

For more information about this award, please contact:

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