



# Press release

Middelburg, 23 February 2021

## Livestream ceremony and Meet-up on 31 March 2021

# Special freedom fighters receive Four Freedoms Awards

**On Wednesday 31 March 2021, the postponed Four Freedoms Awards 2020 will be presented to Filipino journalist Maria Ressa, presenter Sander de Kramer (Sunday Foundation), Religions for Peace (Azza Karam), the Mayor of Palermo Leoluca Orlando and the United Nations (António Guterres). These exceptional people and organizations will receive an award for their dedication to the four freedoms of President Roosevelt. After the official ceremony, a live program will be broadcast from Middelburg. Young people have conversations with these special freedom fighters. Online audience can ask questions.**

The premiere of the 2020 tribute to the laureates will start at 1 pm with a special documentary/film screening. The Meet-up will be broadcast live from the Nieuwe Kerk in Middelburg at 2 pm, during which the laureates will have conversations with young admirers. Writer and journalist Joris Luyendijk will host the Meet-up and speakers from Freedom Lectures Natascha van Weezel, Simone Weimans, Massih Hutak and Joris Linszen will reflect on the work of the laureates. They will also enter into discussion with young people about their vision of freedom. People watching can ask questions via the chat room.

Chairman of the Roosevelt Foundation Han Polman, who is also the King's Commissioner of the Province of Zeeland: "I am pleased that in the current circumstances we can still present the awards in an appropriate manner. In a way that does justice to the laureates. After all, Roosevelt's words remain unaffected today. Certainly in this day and age we are especially aware of the importance of, in particular, the freedom from fear and want. And for good reason the International Four Freedoms Award goes to the United Nations. Especially in the fight against the corona pandemic - where there is a strong tendency to choose only for their own people - we can only survive if countries join forces and support each other."

### **Accessible to everyone online**

The Meet-up will take place for the first time and is the result of an intensive collaboration between the Roosevelt Foundation and Stichting Vrijheidscolleges. Both organizations aim to inspire young and old people to think about the value of the Four Freedoms and the philosophy of the Roosevelts. In addition to the Meet-up, the Stichting Vrijheidscolleges also organizes programs and lectures about freedom at liberation festivals, schools and at various other locations in the Netherlands.

### **Four Freedoms Awards 2021 Awards**

- The International Four Freedoms Award goes to the United Nations. Secretary General António Guterres will receive the award on behalf of the organization.
- The Freedom of Speech Award goes to Filipino journalist Maria Ressa.
- The Freedom of Religion Award goes to Religions for Peace International. Azza Karam receives the award on behalf of the organization.
- The Freedom from Want Award goes to the Dutch journalist and television presenter Sander de Kramer.
- The Freedom from Fear award goes to the Italian Mayor, Leoluca Orlando.

### **About the Roosevelt Four Freedoms Awards**

The Four Freedoms Medals are presented each year to people and organizations whose achievements have demonstrated a commitment to the principles which President Roosevelt proclaimed in his historic speech to Congress on 6 January 1941. In this speech he said that if democracy is to survive and flourish, people everywhere in the world are entitled to four human rights: freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear. Important words that have not lost any of their value and meaning even after almost 80 years.

Earlier Freedoms Medals were awarded to some of the most distinguished world citizens of our time, including Harry S. Truman, H.R.H. Princess Juliana of The Netherlands, John F. Kennedy, Nelson Mandela, J. William Fulbright, Arthur Miller, Jimmy Carter, former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, Malala Yousafzai, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and dr. Angela Merkel.

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### **Not for publication:**

**Image bank:** <http://bit.ly/3ba7Cum>

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*Also view the attachment with more information about the laureates.*

## **Attachment:**

### **More information about the laureates and why they receive the awards**

#### **International Four Freedoms Award: United Nations**

Since its creation in 1945, the United Nations has maintained its commitment to international peace and security, achieving international co-operation, and promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. This year marks 75 years since the founding of the United Nations and the creation and history of the United Nations are closely intertwined with the lives of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor. President Roosevelt is considered to be the United Nation's principal architect and Eleanor Roosevelt served as the first chair of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and oversaw the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The board of the Roosevelt Foundation is deeply honored that on behalf of the United Nations, UN Secretary-General António Guterres will accept the International Four Freedoms Award, as a sign of the foundation's recognition of the United Nation's dedication to protect and promote the respect for the four freedoms for everyone, everywhere in the world.

#### **Freedom of Speech and Expression: Maria Ressa**

The award for Ms. Ressa is motivated by her continuing dedication to tell people what is happening in the world and her commitment to address human rights abuses, no matter how tough circumstances are or how much opposition she meets. Ms. Ressa fights for freedom of the press, at first as an investigative reporter on terrorism for CNN in Southeast Asia and now as the executive editor of online news outlet Rappler.

She started Rappler in 2012 as a social news network to inspire social engagement and change through digital means. At the same time, Rappler is a critical news organization with a wide range of messages, from politics to entertainment. Rappler is now one of the few media organizations in the Republic of the Philippines that is openly critical on the "war on drugs". Its persistence in documenting the deadly reality of this "war" has attracted the wrath of the authorities.

This, however, has not diminished Ms. Ressa's drive as a journalist to seek the truth and to call authorities to account. Although she was personally attacked and received death threats, she has stated that she will always remain "the canary in the coalmine" and she will keep speaking out for the next generation. Ms. Ressa is a true advocate of the freedom of speech and expression and an example and inspiration to us all.

#### **Freedom of Worship: Religions for Peace International**

The award for the Freedom of Worship goes to Religions for Peace International for the alliance's determined commitment to promote peace and to speak up for those most in need. Religions for Peace is devoted to build bridges between religious communities in order to increase mutual trust and reduce hostility in areas of conflict and to offer a platform for common action. The alliance respects and honors religious differences and works to advance interreligious dialogue and consensus.

Religions for Peace has proven to be a peacemaker for almost 50 years and the world's religious communities effectively cooperate for peace through its global network. The alliance resists and opposes the misuse and misperception of our faiths that fuel violence and hate. Their continued efforts to counter those misperceptions, prejudices and distrust between peoples are an example to us all.

Prof. dr. Azza Karam, Secretary General, will receive the award on behalf of Religions for Peace. Azza Karam is a Professor of Religion and Development at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam and has, amongst others, served in different positions in the United Nations since 2004.

#### **Freedom from Want: Sander de Kramer**

The award for Freedom from Want goes to Mr. de Kramer for his innovative way of providing help and assistance and his dedicated commitment to the less fortunate, both at home and abroad. In 2007 he travelled as a journalist to Sierra Leone, which the United Nations at that time proclaimed "the worst place on earth." He was deeply touched by the suffering and together with Hugo Borst, he founded the Sunday Foundation. His foundation offers help in so-called "forgotten places" on earth and sets up projects to alleviate the worst needs: projects of hope. In Sierra Leone he saved child slaves from the mines and now they go to school. Local contractors have now built more than twenty schools for boys and girls. Former street prostitutes now make school uniforms and war widows

