

STOCKHOLM HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD 2019

4 November 2019, Berwaldhallen

[Thank you *Malena Ernman* for your excellent performance! We are looking forward to hear more from you later on.]

Honoured Laureate,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

My name is Mia Edwall Insulander. I am the Secretary General of the Swedish Bar Association. It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to the Stockholm Human Rights Award Ceremony 2019.

This is the eleventh time we celebrate an example of an outstanding commitment to human rights and rule of law in the interest of humanity and the democratic society.

Since 2009 the Swedish Bar Association, in cooperation with *the International Bar Association (IBA)* and *the International Legal Assistance Consortium (ILAC)*, has awarded distinguished human rights work at an international level. The Stockholm Human Rights Award is awarded annually to a person and/or an organization for outstanding services in the support and protection of human rights and the rule of law.

The founding organizations of this award; *the Swedish Bar Association, the International Bar Association and the International Legal Assistance Consortium* represent lawyers, judges, prosecutors and legal civil servants from

all around the world. As a common principal goal we pursue the advancement of international justice and support the democratic state built on the rule of law.

This year's laureate; the 2019 recipient of the Stockholm Human Rights Award is *Mr. David Miliband*, and the humanitarian aid body that he heads, *the International Rescue Committee (IRC)*.

The mission of the *International Rescue Committee* is to help people whose lives and livelihoods are shattered by conflict and disaster to survive, recover and gain control of their future. The IRC shapes humanitarian policies and practices in ways that improve the lives of people worldwide.

Today we unfortunately see that frequent and serious violations of the rule of law and international human rights are taking place all over the world. The number of threats to human rights and international security of today are many; for example

- * a new political landscape in the Western world where protectionism, nationalism and populism is spreading,
- * continuing escalation of risk for military interventions in conflict areas all over the world and
- * the never ending pollution of our environment and the on-going climate change,

This is obviously a dangerous development.

In the light of the exceptional migratory crisis, it is also of importance to provide security and appropriate legal assistance to those people in order to guarantee their rights.

In my belief, it is a fundamental element of humanity to ensure that everyone

has access to adequate protection and assistance in accordance with their inherent dignity and worth as human beings.

Against this background, this year's laureate, *Mr. David Miliband and the International Rescue Committee (IRC)*, is particularly deserving, as a magnificent role model for life saving and life improving work for those in need around the world.

I have read David Miliband's book "Rescue" – "Refugees and the political Crisis of our time" and it affected me. In chapter 2 about "why we should care" he writes that:

"Two of the most basic human values, without there is no humanity, are empathy and its cousin altruism. Empathy for other people simply because they are people, not because of their race, religion, or politics, is a basic building block of what makes civilization. Show empathy for those we do not know, turn that empathy into action, and we live out the most basic value of humankind"

This is what *the International Rescue Committee (IRC)* and its President *David Miliband* do.

David Miliband is President and Chief Executive Officer of *the International Rescue Committee*, where he oversees the agency's humanitarian relief operations in more than 40 war-affected countries and its refugee resettlement and assistance programs in 28 United States cities.

As the son of Jewish refugees who fled to the United Kingdom in 1940, Mr. Miliband brings a personal commitment to the IRC's work.

Mr. Miliband has dedicated his career to improving access to justice and upholding the rule of law.

His commitment to public service was first cemented when he joined the UK government as Member of Parliament in 2001, a position he held for 12 years. In 2006, Mr. Miliband was appointed Environment Secretary. In this post, he was responsible for developing British policy on climate change, and elevated the issue to priority status for policymakers. From 2007 to 2010, Miliband was the 74th Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom, a position which he used to highlight and condemn human rights atrocities across the world. In 2013, Mr. Miliband resigned his parliamentary seat to head *the International Rescue Committee*.

Under Miliband's leadership, *the International Rescue Committee* has expanded its ability to rapidly respond to humanitarian crises and meet the needs of many people uprooted by conflict, war and disaster.

The International Rescue Committee has a rich history dating back to the early 20th century, when, in addition to initiating emergency relief programs at the end of World War II, it founded hospitals and children's centres.

The International Rescue Committee helps those who are recovering from conflict and disaster to understand their rights and make informed choices for their futures. Millions of people across the world do not have control over important choices that affect their lives, such as where they live, how they live, and how they are governed.

The IRC provides children, youth and adults with safe, quality educational opportunities that help them learn the skills they need to survive.

The International Rescue Committee is also fighting for a world where women and girls have an equal chance to succeed. Women and girls – particularly in places affected by crisis – face discrimination, violence, and a lack of equal opportunities that threaten their lives and rob them of their potential. The IRC helps with support and investment, so that they can change their own future.

In addition to its ongoing work to assist in asylum proceedings in the USA, the IRC provides clean water, shelter, healthcare and education to people in conflict-stricken countries in numerous countries, including Myanmar, Syria and Yemen.

As you can appreciate from this description of David Miliband's and the IRC's work accomplishments, this year's laureate of the Stockholm Human Rights Award is utmost well deserved.

To join me and hand over the prize I would like to welcome on stage the President of the International Bar Association Mr Horacio Bernardes Neto. Please join me.

We are very proud and honored to have the privilege – on behalf of the International Legal Assistance Consortium, the International Bar Association, and The Swedish Bar Association – to hand over the Award, as a token of our sincere gratitude for all your hard work and efforts for those in need and for your outstanding contribution to the protection of human rights and the rule of law.

Dear Laureate, Dear Mr. Miliband; may I ask you to come up and receive the Award? Please give our laureate a warm applause!