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Columbia University Calls for Nominations for Second Annual Global Freedom of Expression Prizes

NEW YORK, October 11, 2015 — Columbia University today announced that it will begin accepting nominations for the second annual Columbia Global Freedom of Expression Prizes, including self-nominations, of jurists and other legal experts, academics, and non-governmental organizations actively engaged in protecting freedom of expression around the world.

Established by Columbia President Lee C. Bollinger in 2014, Columbia Global Freedom of Expression works to document and support the development of legal norms that foster the free flow of information and expression worldwide. First awarded in 2015, the Columbia Global Freedom of Expression Prizes recognize judicial decisions and legal representation that have strengthened freedom of expression and contributed to international legal standards and jurisprudence for free speech and press.

“We see in so many nations that freedom of press and speech is under assault,” said Bollinger, “Yet as we learned last year when we awarded our first Global Freedom of Expression Prizes, there are many accomplished advocates and courts creating important new case law that not only protects freedom in their own societies, but also contributes to building the legal norms that are essential for our global marketplace of ideas to thrive. It is important for us to honor and shine a light on these valuable efforts around the world.”

The Prizes are judged by an independent panel of experts, in law, advocacy, journalism, and human rights, chaired by Bollinger. Winners will be honored at a celebration at Columbia University in the Spring of 2016.

Prizes are offered in two categories: excellence in legal services and significant legal ruling.

- The Significant Legal Ruling prize celebrates a decision which, in the last 12 months, has constituted a significant, path-breaking legal ruling that upheld international freedom of expression standards.
- The Excellence in Legal Services prize will go to lawyers, academics or NGOs that have contributed, over the last 12 months, innovative and/or effective defense of freedom of expression in the form of a legal brief, amicus brief or academic article.

“The Columbia Global Freedom of Expression Prizes celebrate the emergence of a more robust global legal community in which judges, lawyers, civil society, and universities interact to protect and strengthen the rule of law through and for the free flow of information,” says Dr. Agnes Callamard, Director of Columbia Global Freedom of Expression. “Columbia University as a global knowledge forum could not be a better place from which to recognize excellence in legal reasoning based on international free speech standards.”

Columbia's inaugural Global Freedom of Expression Prizes in 2015 were awarded to the Constitutional Court of Turkey, for its protection of online freedom of expression by striking down legislative amendments to an Internet law; the Constitutional Court of Zimbabwe, for ruling that criminal defamation is unconstitutional; and the Media Legal Defence Initiative, for its brief to the African Court of Human and People's Rights that directed Burkina Faso to reform criminal defamation law.

Nomination forms for the 2016 Prizes are available at:

<https://globalfreedomofexpression.columbia.edu/prizes/>

The deadline for nominations is December 15, 2015.

About Columbia Global Freedom of Expression

Columbia Global Freedom of Expression was launched in 2014 by **Columbia University President Lee Bollinger** to advance understanding of the international and national norms and institutions that best protect the free flow of information and expression in an interconnected global community with major common challenges to address. To achieve its mission, Columbia Global Freedom of Expression compiles and analyses judgments on freedom of expression from around the world, stored on a searchable database and available online; undertakes and commissions research and policy projects; organizes events and conferences; and participates in and contributes to global debates on the protection of freedom of expression and information in the 21st century. **Dr. Agnès Callamard**, a distinguished human rights expert and former director of the organization ARTICLE 19, is executive director.

About Columbia University

Among the world's leading research universities, **Columbia University** in the City of New York continuously seeks to advance the frontiers of scholarship and foster a campus community deeply engaged in the complex issues of our time through teaching, research, patient care and public service. The University is comprised of 16 undergraduate, graduate and professional schools, and four affiliated colleges and seminaries in Manhattan, and a wide array of research institutes and global centers around the world. More than 40,000 students, award-winning faculty and professional staff define the University's underlying values and commitment to pursuing new knowledge and educating informed, engaged citizens. Founded in 1754 as King's College, Columbia is the fifth oldest institution of higher learning in the United States.

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