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Azerbaijani journalist selected for annual UN press freedom award



Azerbaijani journalist and human rights activist Eynulla Fatullayev, winner of the 2012 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize. Photo: UNESCO

17 April 2012 –

An Azerbaijani journalist and human rights activist has been named this year's winner of the annual United Nations prize that honours those promoting freedom of expression.

Eynulla Fatullayev, 35, was announced as the laureate of the 2012 UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#))/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize, named in memory of a Colombian newspaper publisher murdered in 1987 for denouncing the activities of powerful drug barons in his country.

Mr. Fatullayev is the former editor-in-chief and founder of the popular independent Russian-language weekly *Realny Azerbaijan* (Real Azerbaijan) and the Azeri-language daily *Gundalik Azarbaycan* (Azerbaijan Daily) newspapers.

“Throughout his career, he has unfailingly and steadfastly spoken out for freedom of the press and freedom of expression,” UNESCO stated in a [news release](#). Imprisoned in 2007, Mr. Fatullayev was released last year by presidential pardon on Azerbaijan’s Republic Day, 26 May. In July of last year, he founded the “Public Union for Human Rights,” a non-governmental human rights organization.

The UNESCO prize was created in 1997 by the agency’s Executive Board and is awarded annually during the celebration of World Press Freedom Day on 3 May, and honours the work of an individual or an organization defending or promoting freedom of expression anywhere in the world, especially if this action puts the individual’s life at risk.

Candidates are proposed by UNESCO Member States, and regional or international organizations that defend and promote freedom of expression.

Previous recipients of the prize include Ahmad Zeidabadi (Iran, 2011), Mónica González Mujica (Chile, 2010), Lasantha Wickrematunge (Sri Lanka, 2009), Lydia Cacho (Mexico, 2008) and Anna Politkovskaya (Russia, 2007).

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