



PRESS RELEASE

The Rwandan Human Rights Awards recognises and celebrates the extraordinary contributions of individuals, organisations and businesses to the field of Rwandan related human rights each year.

Every year some truly amazing people fight to protect, rights, justice and freedoms of Rwandans. Challenging dictatorship and injustice and fighting for the rights of Rwandans living in Rwanda and abroad. Their work is more vital than ever and yet they often unrecognised.

The Rwandan Human Rights Awards give us a unique opportunity to share their stories and shine a light on their remarkable work and to celebrate the hard-work, inspiration and dedication of those who champion the rights of ordinary Rwandan people.

A panel of experts meet on Friday 3rd November 2016 and selected winners who have been fighting for justice, courageous campaigners standing-up to power, journalists uncovering uncomfortable truths, young activists bringing about change and brilliant individuals who've spent their lives working to protect the rights and freedoms of Rwandans.

Selected winners of 2017 were as follow:

1. LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT CATEGORY:

Joseph Matata the veteran human right campaigner and activist was selected to be a winner in this category.

Mr Matata has showed incredible courage, consistency and uncompromising dedication for over 3 decades in fighting for Human Rights, Justice and Freedoms for Rwandans.

Mr Matata actions and activities have considerably contributed in raising awareness about human rights situation in Rwanda at various period in the last 30 years.

Mr Matata voice has been bad news in ears of political and military leaders that have been accused of abusing human rights of Rwandans for many years.

2. DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM CATEGORY:

Boniface Twagirimana and **Diane Shima Rwigara** were selected winners in this category as result of their courageous, fearless advocacy for political space and freedom within a challenging environment in 2017.

As first vice president of unregistered party FDU-INKINDI, **Mr Twagirimana** has been a loud voice and bold campaigner for more political space and advocated for release of all political prisoners.

Miss Rwigara came in public eye and in political scene, when she announced that she will stand as candidate in 2017 presidential election. Despite that she was denied participating, she has demonstrated to have an incredible zeal to speak out about the fear environment that exist in Rwanda. She has also raised awareness about the importance of freedom and democracy for sustainable peace.

3. HUMAN RIGHT DEVELOPMENT INNOVATION CATEGORY

BBC2 Television has been selected as a winner in this category as result of producing and broadcasting an innovative documentary called “**Rwandan’s Untold Story**” that gave a platform to unheard voices in relation to history of Rwanda most particularly on what happened in 1994.

The documentary has ignited an important, powerful and useful debate and conversation among Rwandans in UK and abroad. The debate generated no animosity which demonstrated by positive energy and interest it has created.

The documentary has undoubtedly earned its place in Rwanda history as a valuable tool that will facilitate open and inclusive debate that will shape future Rwanda whose foundation will be built on values of freedom, justice and democracy.

4. MEDIA EXCELLENCE CATEGORY

Voice of America – Kirundi and Kinyarwanda section has been selected as winner in this category for its effective news reporting and innovative radio programmes and become the number one source of credible and unbiased news about what is happening in Rwanda.

In the process it raised awareness of importance of democracy, freedom and fair justice as well as importance of a free media.

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