

Citizens Peace Award for 2011 to IMADR President Nimalka Fernando

IMADR President Nimalka Fernando was awarded the 2011 Citizens Peace Award in Sri Lanka on June 26, 2012 for her lifelong struggle for peace and human rights both locally and internationally. The National Peace Council of Sri Lanka, who sponsored the award, released the following statement.

The Citizens Peace Award for 2011 of the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka has been awarded to Dr Nimalka Fernando, President of the International Movement Against all Forms of Discrimination and Racism. In making this award to her, the National Peace Council considered the courage, commitment and leadership she has demonstrated in a consistent manner over a long period in working for human rights, people's empowerment and justice for sustainable peace in Sri Lanka. The awards ceremony took place on June 26, 2012 at the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute for International Relations & Strategic Studies in the presence of members of government, opposition, diplomatic community and long time colleagues and activists from civil society and grassroots communities.

Nimalka Fernando is one of Sri Lanka's best-known human rights advocates both internationally and locally. With a track record of social activism from her school days, and networking with civil society groups throughout the world, she has been a powerful civic voice for human rights, justice and peace. She has addressed countless meetings with small groups throughout the country, as well as appeared on a large number of talk shows on national radio and television. She has shown it is possible for citizens to utilize their own unique strengths to work for their fellow citizens, individually and in association, and change hearts and minds. Her forthright stands in favour of the application of international standards to issues of governance and accountability have earned the disfavour of successive governments and extreme nationalists. Her example of dauntless courage and in speaking up and working for social causes she believes in has been a source of strength to civil society.

The Citizens Peace Award was established in 2010 by the National Peace Council to honour and encourage those individuals in civil society who have demonstrated courage and consistency in the protection of and respect for human rights; peaceful settlement of disputes and promoting increased understanding between and among communities.

Other criteria considered included work in hostile conditions, sacrifices made and being a Sri Lankan citizen working within Sri Lanka. The selection of the winner was by the nine-member Board of Directors of NPC and ratified by its 19-member Governing Council. The prize is made possible by funds received from the Sakai City Government's Peace Contribution Award, Soroptimist International of Osaka Izumi and the National Peace Council.

<Governing Council>

The National Peace Council is an independent and non-partisan organisation that works towards a negotiated political solution to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. It has a vision of a peaceful and prosperous Sri Lanka in which the freedom, human rights and democratic rights of all the communities are respected. The policy of the National Peace Council is determined by its Governing Council of 20 members who are drawn from diverse walks of life and belong to all the main ethnic and religious communities in the country.