

Press Release
Nov. 27, 2024

Odhikar Receives the 2024 Asia Democracy and Human Rights Award

The Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (TFD) announced today (Nov. 27) that the 2024 Asia Democracy and Human Rights Award (ADHRA) will be awarded to Odhikar, a leading human rights organization in Bangladesh.

"Odhikar" means "rights" in Bengali, and since its establishment in 1994, Odhikar has deepened democracy and human rights in Bangladesh through research, advocacy, overseeing the government and providing trainings for over 400 human rights defenders. The foundation has published annual human rights reports since 1996, monitoring civil rights and government transparency, and exposing incidents of human rights persecution in Bangladesh, such as extra-judicial killings, involuntary disappearances and torture. Odhikar also steered the Bangladesh coalition for motivating the government to ratify the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court in 2010, which led to Bangladesh contributing to international efforts in human rights investigations into the persecution of the Rohingya people starting in 2016. As defenders of human rights work in Bangladesh, Odhikar organizes trainings to empower those in the same field and invigorate Bangladesh's civil society.

This year's ADHRA is awarded to Odhikar in recognition of the civil and political rights advocacy they have carried out and expanded in Bangladesh for three decades, despite challenges such as harassment, imprisonment, and surveillance. We hope to encourage their work and those in the same field, and hope they realize their efforts and perseverance have not gone unnoticed, and they have the support of democracy and human rights activists and organizations around the world, including the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy.

Odhikar was named the Award winner after a two-stage reviewing process (See Annex I). The TFD convened a preliminary review panel meeting facilitated by TFD President Da-Chi Liao to discuss and shortlist the finalists.



The finalists' names and credentials were then sent to the final review panel for a final decision. This year's nominees included individuals and organizations that have made respective contributions pertaining to the promotion of civil and political rights, human rights report publishing, media literacy education, human rights lawyers, assistance of the homeless and minority groups, and providing human rights defenders trainings and toolkits.

The Taiwan Foundation for Democracy will host the 19th Asia Democracy and Human Rights Award ceremony on Dec. 10, 2024, International Human Rights Day. The Asia Democracy and Human Rights Award includes an award trophy and a grant of US\$100,000 to support the organization's continuous efforts and contribution to the consolidation of democracy.

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Annex I

Preliminary Review Panel

1. Kao Yu-Jen, Chairman, 21st Century Foundation
2. Wei Chien-Feng, Supervisory Board Member, Taiwan Foundation for Democracy
3. Michael Hsin-Huang Hsiao, Distinguished Research Fellow, Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica
4. Eric Chen-Hua Yu, Professor of Department of Political Science, National Chengchi University
5. Chi Hui-Jung, Former Chief Executive, Garden of Hope Foundation / Control Yuan Member
6. Rebecca Wang, Chairperson, Taiwan Aid
7. Dr. Da-Chi Liao, President, Taiwan Foundation for Democracy

Final Review Panel

1. Sarah Cook, Former Research Director for China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, Freedom House
2. Pierre Haski, President, Reporters Without Borders Mr. Pierre Haski, President, Reporters Without Borders
3. Jakub Klepal, Executive Director, Forum 2000
4. Dr. Sophie Richardson, Former China Director, Human Rights Watch
5. Dr. Daniel Twining, President, International Republican Institute
6. Hon. Daniel K.Y. Han, Chairman, Taiwan Foundation for Democracy
7. Dr. Da-Chi Liao, President, Taiwan Foundation for Democracy