



# ALL 2018 FOUR FREEDOMS AWARDS LAUREATES KNOWN

**On Tuesday, February 6th 2018, the chairman of the Roosevelt Foundation and King's Commissioner in the Province of Zeeland, Mr. Han Polman, announced the names of the 2018 Four Freedoms Awards Laureates.**

- The International Four Freedoms Award goes to Costa Rican diplomat Christiana Figueres Olsen who represents the many people whose hard work and dedication contributed to the realization of the Paris Climate Agreement;
- The award for the Freedom of Speech and Expression goes to Turkish journalist Erol Önderoğlu;
- The award for the Freedom of Worship goes to South Sudanese Bishop Paride Taban
- The award for the Freedom from Want goes to Belgian conservationist Emmanuel de Merode on behalf of the Virunga Alliance in the Democratic Republic of Congo;
- The award for the Freedom from Fear goes to Nepalese human rights activist Urmila Chaudhary.

The Four Freedoms Awards ceremony will take place on 16 May 2018 in Middelburg.

## **International Four Freedoms Award: *Paris Climate Agreement – Christiana Figueres***

The International Four Freedoms Award goes to Christiana Figueres Olsen as a representative of all those whose hard work and dedication for many years contributed to the realization of the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement. The rebuilding of the global climate change negotiation process based on fairness, transparency and collaboration leading to the Climate Agreement is widely recognized as a historical achievement. The signature of this Climate Agreement confirms that the great majority of countries wants to work to reduce the temperature rise and the disastrous consequences of climate change. A major and important challenge in relation to the future of next generations in particular and our planet in general.

Christiana Figueres Olsen wrote in December 2015 in an open letter of gratitude: "... to all those, who labored now and before, so

long and so hard, I say: this is your success! Individually for each of you, but more powerfully, collectively for all of us. (...) We have come together to address the most daunting of challenges. We have done so by respecting our differences and setting aside our enmity, by focusing on the present we share and the future we must build together..." The Roosevelt Foundation endorses this statement and that is why the International Four Freedoms Award 2018 is for all those dedicated men and women.

Christiana Figueres Olsen will personally receive the award on 16 May as the former Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It is also thanks to her negotiation skills, her ability to engage and to build a consensus that the Climate Agreement has been concluded.

## **Freedom of Speech and Expression: *Erol Önderoğlu***

The award for Mr. Önderoğlu is motivated by his tireless and persistent dedication to defend the freedom of speech and expression. As correspondent for Reporters Without Borders in Turkey and as editor of independent press agency Bianet he has for over 20 years actively followed the court cases of fellow journalists, to support them and report objectively on violations of freedom of the press. In more than 4,600 articles and columns to date, he has monitored and reported on these violations even when he was faced with repression and imprisonment. In life and work he is devoted to raising awareness of the necessity of freedom of speech and expression, for men and women, from all kinds of backgrounds, in Turkey and abroad.

## **Freedom of Worship: *Bishop Paride Taban***

The award for the Freedom of Worship goes to Bishop Paride Taban for his life-long and selfless dedication to the cause of bringing freedom and peace to the people of South Sudan. Since the 1960's he has worked as a peacemaker, drawing on seemingly bottomless reserves of patience, optimism and strategic insight. His great wisdom and deep respect for different religions and cultures has enabled him to forge emotional



between otherwise battling groups. The Peace Village is the visible embodiment of the movement. Bishop Paride Taban continues to work for an end to the human suffering and a peaceful solution of the conflict in South Sudan in local, national and international forums. With his life's work he is keeping the flame of peace alive, not only by preaching the word of God but by living it.

### **Freedom from Want:**

#### **Emmanuel de Merode - Virunga Alliance**

Nominee for Freedom from Want goes to Emmanuel de Merode, a conservationist who works on behalf of the Virunga Alliance for his tireless and dedicated efforts to protect the exceptional flora and fauna of Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo as well as to protect the communities that live near Virunga's border. A dangerous job because of the intensity of the conflict in and around the park, the 10 year civil war and M23 rebellion. In 2008 Emmanuel de Merode has led a force of 360 Congolese rangers in an effort to militarize the national park, re-establish the rule of law, initiate local development and attract significant funding through social media, entrepreneurship and tourism development. In 2011 Emmanuel de Merode assisted in the founding of the Virunga Alliance, that aims to bring peace and prosperity through the sustainable economic development of natural resources for the four million people who live near the park's borders. A percentage of the park's revenues is invested in community development projects. The work of the Alliance includes the promotion of sustainable agriculture for poor households and support for the opening of schools. Despite a life-threatening situation Emmanuel de Merode continues his tireless and noble work in and around Virunga National Park together with the team of the Virunga Alliance.

### **Freedom from Fear:**

#### **Urmila Chaudhary**

Nominee for Ms. Urmila Chaudhary is honored by her courage and determination to bring an end to the Kamlari system of child labor and her fight for the rights of girls, especially their right to education. After being treated as a child household slave herself for more than 11 years, she has become an influential young woman and human rights activist for and in her community despite the risks for her personal safety and the

injuries she has suffered in her quest. She has helped to establish the Freed Kamlari Development Forum (FKDF), a Nepalese non-profit organization that meets Kamlaris' needs by locating and rescuing the remaining Kamlaris, employing peer counsellors to give emotional support to former Kamlaris, and raising awareness in surrounding communities of issues such as child labor and the importance of education for girls. By tirelessly speaking out in public for the rights of former Kamlaris and for girls' rights in Nepal, she has become a role model and an inspiration for many others.

The Four Freedoms Medals are presented each year to men, women and organizations whose achievements have demonstrated a commitment to the principles which President Roosevelt proclaimed in his historic speech to Congress on 6 January 1941. In this speech he said that if democracy is to survive and flourish, people everywhere in the world are entitled to four human rights: freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear. Important words that have not lost any of their value and meaning even after 77 years.

Earlier Freedoms Medals were awarded to some of the most distinguished world citizens of our time, including Harry S. Truman, H.R.H. Princess Juliana of The Netherlands, John F. Kennedy, Nelson Mandela, J. William Fulbright, Arthur Miller, Jimmy Carter, former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, Malala Yousafzai, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Dr. Angela Merkel.

The Roosevelt Foundation in Middelburg and the Roosevelt Institute in New York work to inspire people to promote these four freedoms, everywhere in the world. The Four Freedoms Awards ceremonies take place in the odd years in New York and in the even years in Middelburg.

*More information about the Four Freedoms Awards and the Roosevelt Foundation and the Roosevelt Institute is available at the websites:*

<http://www.fourfreedoms.nl/>  
<http://rooseveltinstitute.org/>

**Read the Nomination of Bishop Paride Taban for Roosevelt Academy**