



# Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD)

Rms 310-311, Philippine Social Science Center, Commonwealth Ave., Brgy Central, Diliman, Quezon City

Telefax: 00-632-4546759 Telephone Number 00-632-4566434 Mobile 00-63-9177924058

Email [afad@surfshop.net.ph](mailto:afad@surfshop.net.ph) website [www.afad-online.org](http://www.afad-online.org)

## **AFAD WAS AWARDED THE 2016 ASIA DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD (ADHRA)**

Manila, 11 November 2016 – The Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD) wishes to express its deepest gratitude to the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (TFD) for selecting it the 2016 Asia Democracy and Human Rights Award (ADHRA).

Indeed, this important recognition from the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy comes at a very sensitive time for AFAD, as its Chairperson has been kept in arbitrary detention in Indian-administered Kashmir since September 16, 2016.

Each year, TFD presents this award to one individual or organization that has made significant contributions to the advancement of democracy and human rights in Asia. This year, this prestigious prize has been awarded to AFAD ***“for the courage, leadership and vision it brings to the world.”***

AFAD was chosen from a pool of 11 candidates by a rigorous two-stage reviewing process. AFAD wishes to thank Ms. Evelyn Balais-Serrano, former Director of Forum-Asia and Mr. Basil Fernando of the Asian Human Rights Commission for speaking so highly of AFAD’ struggles and work in their nomination letters.

During the past 18 years, AFAD has grown into a Federation of 14 member organizations in 10 different South-Asian and South-East Asian countries. There have been important victories, such as the approval of the Convention on Enforced Disappearances; the enactment in the Philippines of the first domestic law criminalizing enforced disappearances in Asia after 16 years of struggle; the ratification of the Convention by Sri Lanka, and its signing by India, Indonesia and Thailand.

However, enforced disappearances continue to be perpetrated to date in many Asian countries and families are still waiting for truth and justice to be done. AFAD itself and its leaders have been and continue to be persecuted to date. Its former president and Indonesia’s staunch human rights defender, Munir, was poisoned with a lethal dose of arsenic by alleged members of the Military Intelligence Group in a Garuda flight from Jakarta to Amsterdam via Singapore on 7 September 2004.

Mr. Khurram Parvez, AFAD’s Chairperson, is a well-known Kashmiri human rights defender, who has been very vocal in protesting against the countless human rights violations committed by the Indian government in Kashmir over the past years, and with increasing violence this year. As a result of his work, Khurram Parvez has been arrested and is now detained, for almost two months, under the Public Safety Act (PSA), a notorious draconian law used to further curtail the rights of the Kashmiri population.

The official award ceremony will take place in Taipei on December 10th, 2016, International Human Rights Day. The award, which consists of a plaque and a USD 100,000.00 funding from the Government of Taiwan, will be received by the AFAD Secretary General, Ms. Mary Aileen Diez-Bacalso, and the Chairperson of the Defence of Human Rights and AFAD Council Member, Ms. Amina Masood.

The Federation gets its strength from its member organizations, which are actively working on the ground for the protection and promotion of human rights. They are facing threats, intimidation, persecution; nonetheless, they continue to stand side by side of family members, giving them all their support.

This important award is further recognition of the efforts faced and of the constant struggle the AFAD's member organizations engage in every day.

AFAD is honored for having been recognized by the Taiwan Democracy Foundation "for its track record in making a difference in the human rights situation in Asia". This award will give new strength to its struggle and will help in pursuing its vision of a world without *desaparecidos*.

Signed by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Aileen D. Bacalso', written in a cursive style.

**MARY AILEEN D. BACALSO**  
Secretary-General