



**Ludovic-Trarieux International Human Rights Prize 2009**  
**Prix International des droits de l'homme Ludovic-Trarieux 2009**

*“ The award given by lawyers to a lawyer ”*  
*“ L'hommage des avocats à un avocat ”*  
*Depuis/Since/Desde/Dal 1984*

**The fourteenth "LUDOVIC-TRARIEUX INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS PRIZE » 2009 presented to**



***Mrs Beatrice Mtetwa***

*a prominent media lawyer in Zimbabwe, president of the Law Society of Zimbabwe for for her trailblazing role in defending freedom of peaceful assembly , of association and freedom of speech and the rule of law in Zimbabwe.*

**on**  
**Thursday October 29<sup>th</sup> 2009**  
**at 16 .30 p.m.**  
**in House of Lawyers**  
**in PARIS (France)**

by  
**Mr Gérard LARCHER,**  
President of the Sénat (the upper house of the bicameral French Parliament).

***Beatrice Mtetwa***  
***Zimbabwe***

**Ludovic-Trarieux International Human Rights Prize 2009**

*First African Prize Winner since Nelson Mandela jailed in 1985, Beatrice Mtetwa a prominent media lawyer and also one of Zimbabwe's foremost lawyers defending opponents of Robert Mugabe's regime, all at great personal risk.*

## *Beatrice Mtetwa*

### *Zimbabwe*

#### **Ludovic-Trarieux International Human Rights Prize 2009**

Those Mtetwa has defended include many black farmers evicted from their land by the government, the mayor of Harare, a leading member of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

In a country where the law is used as a weapon against independent journalists, Beatrice Mtetwa has continually defended journalists in Zimbabwe who have been detained and harassed. The illegal detention and torture of two journalists in 1999 marked the beginning of an unprecedented clampdown on the free press in Zimbabwe. This came as a new opposition party posed a strong challenge to the government, and a new independent newspaper, the Daily News, was reporting on critical issues. After the government lost a constitutional referendum in 2000, it stepped up its war on the independent press. It introduced new laws under which it became a crime to practise journalism in Zimbabwe without government accreditation.

Beatrice Mtetwa has defended the Guardian newspaper's former Harare correspondent Andrew Meldrum, an American journalist who was expelled from Zimbabwe in May 2003 after 23 years as a correspondent for British papers. She has worked on behalf of the Daily News, Zimbabwe's sole independent daily newspaper until it was closed by the government in 2003. As a consequence, she has been subjected to a savage beating by police.

On October 12, 2003, in Harare, she was the victim of a car-jacking for the second time in eleven days. She contacted the police immediately following the incident but, instead of helping Beatrice Mtetwa, the officers accused her of being drunk and took her into custody. Despite their accusation the officers failed to breathalise her...instead they assaulted her both on route to the police station and then upon her arrival at the station. During these assaults she sustained injuries to her head, face, arms, back and thighs of such severity that they required treatment at the Trauma Centre in Harare upon her release.

In 2005, Beatrice Mtetwa won acquittals for Toby Harnden and Julian Simmonds, journalists with The Sunday Telegraph of London, who were arrested outside a polling station in Zimbabwe during a parliamentary election.

In March 2007, while serving a court order on the police, she was violently manhandled, roughed up abused and dragged by police officers from out of the police station back into the police station where she had just served a court order on the reluctant officers. Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights reported that violent incidents against its members are on the rise in Zimbabwe following the recent crackdown by the police on opposition activities which resulted in the fatal shooting of an MDC activist, the arrest and assaulting of Morgan Tsvangirai and other pro-democracy leaders.

On May 8, 2007, Beatrice Mtetwa, and other lawyers were severely beaten by the police in Harare, for leading the legal profession in Zimbabwe to defend the rule of law and protest the frequent harassment of lawyers in Zimbabwe by the police and the now endemic defiance of court orders by the government. The four lawyers, dressed in professional robes, had been forced into a police truck and driven to an open area in Harare's outskirts after officers broke up a protest of more than 60 lawyers outside Zimbabwe's High Court. Beatrice Mtetwa, suffered bruises on her back, arms, and legs after police in Harare beat her and three colleagues with rubber clubs for several minutes

During a crackdown on the press that occurred amid presidential voting in 2008, Beatrice Mtetwa successfully defended many journalists, including New York Times reporter Barry Bearak and British freelance journalist Steven Bevan charged with working without accreditation from Media and Information Commission (MIC) in violation of a 2002 press law, under which journalists can be sentenced to up to two years in prison.

In March 2009, thanks to Beatrice Mtetwa, human rights campaigner Jestina Mukoko was released on bail from three months of detention. At the same time, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), the Zimbabwean attorney general's office planned a baseless criminal investigation into Beatrice Mtetwa.

## PRESS RELEASE

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Created in 1984, the "International Human Rights Prize Ludovic Trarieux" is awarded to " a lawyer, regardless of nationality or Bar, who throughout his career has illustrated, by his activity or his suffering, the defence of human rights, the promotion of defence rights, the supremacy of law, and the struggle against racism and intolerance in any form ".

It is the oldest and most prestigious award given to a lawyer in the world, commemorating the memory of the French lawyer, Ludovic Trarieux (1840-1904), who in the midst of the Dreyfus Affair, in France, in 1898, founded the " League for the Defence of Human Rights and the Citizen ", because, he said: " It was not only the single cause of a man which was to be defended, but behind this cause, law, justice, humanity ".

The first Prize was awarded on March 29th, 1985 to Nelson Mandela then in jail. It was officially presented to his daughter, Zenani Mandela Dlamini, on April 27th 1985, in front of forty presidents of Bars and Law Societies from Europe and Africa. It was the first award given to Mandela in France and the first around the world given by lawyers. On February 11th 1990, Nelson Mandela was released. Since then, it was decided that the Prize would be awarded again.

Since 2003, the Prize is awarded every year in partnership by the Human Rights Institute of The Bar of Bordeaux, the Human Rights Institute of the Bar of Paris, the Human Rights Institute of The Bar of Brussels, l'Unione forense per la tutela dei diritti dell'uomo (Roma) and the European Bar Human Rights Institute (IDHAE) whose members are the biggest european law societies fighting for human rights such as The Union Internationale des Avocats (UIA), Rechtsanwaltskammer Berlin, Ordre français des Avocats du barreau de Bruxelles, barreau de Luxembourg or Polish National Council of the Bar (Warsaw). It is presented every year in a city that is home to one of the member Institutes.

**1985: Nelson MANDELA (South Africa)**  
**1992: Augusto ZÚÑIGA PAZ (Peru) †**  
**1994: Jadranka CIGELJ (Bosnia-Herzegovina)**  
**1996 Nejjib HOSNI (Tunisia) and Dalila MEZIANE (Algeria).**  
**1998 ZHOU Guoqiang (China)**  
**2000 Esber YAGMURDERELI (Turkey)**  
**2002 Mehrangiz KAR (Iran)**  
**2003 Digna OCHOA and Bárbara ZAMORA (Mexico)**  
**2004: Akhtam NAISSE (Syria)**  
**2005: Henri BURIN DES ROZIERES (Brazil)**  
**2006: Parvez IMROZ (India)**  
**2007 : René GÓMEZ MANZANO (Cuba)**  
**2008 : U AYE MYINT (Burma)**



**[www.ludovictrarieux.org](http://www.ludovictrarieux.org)**