

Press Release

On the Eve of the Oslo Nobel Peace Prize – the Dictator of the Year Prize

On Wednesday, 9 December, “Movement Against Dictators” - a new initiative at Oslo University - will present the first annual Dictator of the Year award at the University Square. The prize will go to “an individual who, during the preceding year, shall have done the most to inspire hostility among his people and between nations, significantly increased the level of human suffering, ruined human livelihoods and created war and mayhem.”

North Korean supreme leader Kim Jong-Il, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, Burmese Senior General Tan Schwe, Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir and Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei are among the eleven candidates on the students’ list, compiled on the basis of advice from human rights experts. This week thousands of students are voting—via Facebook and directly at University institutions—for an evil champion of genocide, torture and oppression.

“The idea behind the prize is to remind the world about the ongoing genocide and torture that affects millions of people whose souls are broken on a daily basis in places that are living hell,” says the initiator of the project, Professor Nina Witoszek, a cultural historian at Center for Development and the Environment. “The Nobel Ceremony gives us a perfect occasion to steal some of the limelight from the peacemakers and to expose the despots and commemorate the victims.” She insists that the Dictator of the Year ceremony is purely a human rights event and not intended to mock the Nobel Prize.

The Dictator of the Year Award is designed as a theatrical street event which is comic yet “bloody serious”, resorting to solemn ritual, slapstick, music and light effects. The Norwegian champion of interactive rap, Nils med Skills, and one of the most exciting Norwegian-American multimedia artists, David Chocron, are among the performers.

Note to photo-editors: The ceremony will feature several striking visual elements including the trophy prize (a brain crowned with barbed wire); creative posters of living and dead dictators; an actor impersonating the winner who will deliver an acceptance speech; a suitcase with 10 million dollars for the winner; torch ceremony commemorating the victims of oppression.

Time and place: 9 December (Wednesday), 14.00, Universitetsplassen, downtown Oslo,

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