

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Paris, 21 June 2021

2021 HUMAN RIGHTS PRIZE OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Dear Sir or Madam,

Applications are now open for the 2021 “Liberté-Égalité-Fraternité” Human Rights Prize of the French Republic, awarded by the Prime Minister of the French Government.

This Prize, created in 1988, is awarded in recognition and support for the completion of individual or collective projects carried out in the field, in France or abroad, regardless of nationality or borders, to promote and protect human rights.

1 – 2021 themes

1 – Non-governmental organizations and individual candidates, regardless of nationality or borders, should submit an application corresponding to one of the two themes for 2021. This application should contain field activities or a project to be implemented in France or abroad.

Theme 1: COVID-19 and defending human rights.

The global public health crisis has shed harsh light on the particular difficulties faced by vulnerable or disadvantaged populations when it comes to real fulfilment of human rights enshrined in international instruments.

The various measures taken by States to counter the pandemic and the resulting restrictions have revealed and heightened socioeconomic inequalities, seriously exposing the most vulnerable populations to human rights violations. Situations of extreme poverty have grown and worsened.

Vulnerable or marginal groups, which are typically less likely to fully enjoy their fundamental rights, have seen the obstacles they face to access their rights worsen with the pandemic. The fight against exclusion is a fight for human dignity. It involves fighting extreme poverty, gender violence and stereotypes, as well as working to lift barriers to the full and effective participation in society of people with disabilities, on an equal footing with everyone else. It also requires gender mainstreaming, to address issues affecting women and girls.

The Human Rights Prize rewards projects aimed at defending effective fulfilment of human rights in the context of the restrictions engendered by the fight against the pandemic. Projects aimed at ensuring the access of vulnerable or disadvantaged persons to their rights will be favoured, with a focus on fighting exclusion.

Theme 2: Education, a common good and a fundamental right

Education is not only a fundamental human right. It is also a right of which the fulfilment directly impacts all other rights. Education is one of the most powerful tools for socially excluded children and adults to escape poverty, facilitating inclusion in society. It reduces the inequalities that affect girls and women.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented crisis for education systems, disrupting the lives of almost 1.6 billion schoolchildren and students in more than 190 countries, across all continents. According to a United Nations report,¹ the closure of schools and other places of learning affected 94% of people in education worldwide, and up to 99% in low- and lower-middle-income countries.

The crisis has exacerbated existing educational disparities, and offered a context conducive to general widening of inequalities. According to UNESCO, more than 262 million children and young people are today not in school. Six out of ten never achieve basic reading, writing and maths skills, even after several years of study. Most of these unschooled children are girls.

All that contributes to poverty and marginalization. It is now widely acknowledged that access to school provides skills and knowledge for children to choose their futures, breaking the cycle of poverty and its inheritance from generation to generation. Similarly, continuous schooling for girls is particularly beneficial for countries' social and economic progress.

As such, individuals and non-governmental organizations with one or more field projects aimed at ensuring equitable education for girls and boys, including children from minorities, who are living in extreme poverty, or who have disabilities, are eligible to apply. Organizations working to improve the quality of education through community involvement and support for teacher training, or with projects to guarantee long-term education, meaning offering children quality education as early as possible and for as long as possible, may also be eligible.

2 – Award ceremony

The five prize winners will be invited to Paris for the official ceremony. They will receive a medal and share a total sum of €70,000, awarded by the CNCDH and to be used to implement their projects. They may introduce themselves as 2021 laureates of the Human Rights Prize of the French Republic.

Five runners-up will be awarded a “special mention” medal by the French ambassador in their country of origin.

3 – Rules

Applications must comply with the prize rules,

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https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/08/sg_policy_brief_covid-19_and_education_august_2020.pdf

which are available upon request. They can also be found on the CNCDH website: <http://www.cncdh.fr/fr/prix/prix-des-droits-de-lhomme> .

4 – Application

The application must be written in French and include:

- a) A letter of application presented and signed by the president or legal representative of the NGO concerned, or by the individual candidate;
- b) The application form, which is attached to this call for applications and can be downloaded from the CNCDH website: <http://www.cncdh.fr/fr/edition-prix/prix-des-droits-de-lhomme/prix-des-droits-de-lhomme-edition-2021>

This form should present, in detail, the actions conducted by the association or individual.

- c) A presentation of the NGO (statutes, operations, etc.), where appropriate.
- d) The postal address and bank details of the NGO or individual candidate.

Candidates must send their complete application **by the deadline of 17 October 2021** to the Secretariat-General of the CNCDH:

- CNCDH – For the attention of Cécile RIOU-BATISTA, TSA 40 720 – 20 avenue de Ségur, 75007 PARIS – France
- or by email to: prixdesdroitsdelhomme@cncdh.fr

Once the panel has announced the results, the 2021 Prize will be awarded in Paris by the Prime Minister, or another French minister, around 10 December 2021.

Please **circulate this call for applications widely**.

Yours faithfully,

Magali Lafourcade
Secretary-General of the CNCDH