

Press Release

25 November 2009



FREEDOM
TO CREATE

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Mohsen Makmalbaf Acceptance Speech

In a world where 15 out of every 100 people still go to sleep hungry at night; in a world where Iranian people get killed, tortured and raped just for voting; every award means a platform to talk about the human pains, hoping to find a way to reduce the agony.

I would like to thank the kind members of the jury, and I would like to donate my share of the cash award to the Green Movement NGO; to enable them to help the victims of the brutal incidents after the election in Iran.

I would also like to dedicate the honour of this prestigious award to the spiritual father of Green Movement in Iran, Ayatollah Montazeri. He was once expected to succeed Khomeini as Iran's supreme leader. However, later he was denied the post because of his criticism of the regime for the execution of many innocent people in Iran's prisons during those days. He has been blacklisted and imprisoned in his house for many years now.

Today, despite all the difficulties, Ayatollah Montazeri continues to speak his mind. Recently in one of his Fatwas he stated: "Creating nuclear weapon by countries of the world including Iran is an act against humanity, and Iran should initiate the abandonment of the nuclear weapon even prior to Israel."

All these years, Ayatollah Montazeri with his humanistic view, honesty and unique bravery stayed away from the power. Instead of becoming the leader of Iran like Khamenei, who rules over our people by killing, raping and stealing their votes, he preferred to be imprisoned in his house, but stay a true human.

Ayatollah Montazeri, the spiritual father of the Green Movement in Iran well deserves the dedication of this very special and meaningful award.

Thank you.

About Freedom to Create:

Freedom to Create (www.freedomtcreate.com) is an initiative that seeks to improve lives by addressing society's ability to support and sustain creativity. The initiative focuses on those societies in greatest need.

For creativity to flourish, it's critical to have certain foundations in place – things like education, trust, and freedom of expression. The Freedom to Create initiative concentrates on these foundations.

Through our ArtAction arm (www.artaction.com), we support arts-driven projects that try to strengthen those foundations where they are weak. Through our annual Freedom to Create Prize (www.freedomtcreateprize.com), we celebrate artists who are beacons of inspiration for social change working in the most challenging conditions around the globe. Collectively our efforts seek to drive future prosperity by enabling creativity to flourish.

Freedom to Create is backed by R.F. Chandler (www.rfchandler.com), a Singapore-based private investment group with more than 20 years' experience investing in emerging markets.