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CCBE Human Rights Award 2010 granted to Mexican lawyers who obtained landmark judgment in the Ciudad Juárez femicide

The Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), representing around 1 million lawyers from the European Union and European Economic Area through their member Bars and Law Societies, has granted its 2010 Human Rights Award to Mexican lawyers **David Peña Rodríguez and Karla Micheel Salas Ramírez**, members of the National Association of Democratic Lawyers (ANAD).

David Peña Rodríguez and Karla Micheel Salas Ramírez were the lawyers representing the families of the victims of the uninvestigated assassinations of women in the *Campo Algodonero* case, also known as *Ciudad Juárez femicides*. Their action began in 2001, when the bodies of three young women, Claudia Ivette González, Laura Berenice Ramos Monárrez and Esmeralda Herrera Monreal, were found in a cotton field after they had been raped and killed.

In obtaining the condemnation of the Mexican State for its inaction by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in December 2009, David Peña Rodríguez and Karla Micheel Salas Ramírez also contributed to the recognition of a new category of crime, i.e. "femicide", thus provoking a landmark sentence in the defence of human rights and the fight against gender-based violence.

Before achieving this result, David Peña Rodríguez and Karla Micheel Salas Ramírez had to go through eight years of relentlessly pushing the Mexican authorities to investigate the assassinations and bring the perpetrators to justice and, in reaction, were confronted with concealed evidence and threats and intimidation towards themselves and their clients.

The CCBE President, José-María Davó-Fernandez, declared today: "*David Peña Rodríguez and Karla Micheel Salas Ramírez deserve the 2010 Award, as a sign of the respect of European lawyers for their absolute commitment to human rights in defending the families of the victims and obtaining justice for them. They have contributed directly to the development of international human rights law with the concept of femicide, and so the better defence of victims.*"

The Award will be handed to David Peña Rodríguez and Karla Micheel Salas Ramírez on 26 November 2010, on the occasion of the CCBE Plenary Session in Brussels. The Chairwoman of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights, Heidi Hautala, will deliver a video-message at the same time.

Once available, speeches and video-message will be accessible on the CCBE website (<http://www.ccbe.eu/>).

Background

The CCBE Human Rights Award was created in 2007 in order to highlight the work of a lawyer or lawyers' organisation that brings honour to the legal profession by demonstrating outstanding commitment and sacrifice in upholding fundamental values. In 2009 the Award went to the assassinated Russian lawyer and President of the Rule of Law Institute, Stanislav Markelov, and in 2008 to a Chinese lawyer, Li Heping, and to the group of Spanish legal aid lawyers who were appointed to defend the suspected terrorists in the 11/3 Madrid bombing trial. The first Award, in 2007, went to the organisation Avocats Sans Frontières (Lawyers Without Borders).

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