



PRESS RELEASE

KidsRights announces finalists for International Children's Peace Prize 2016

- **Divina Maloum** from Cameroon (12 years old, theme: peace)
- **Kehkashan Basu** from the United Arab Emirates (16 years old, theme: environment)
- **Muzoon Almellehan** from Syria (18 years old, theme: child refugees)



[Photo's: Divina (12), Kehkashan (16), Muzoon (18)]

Amsterdam, New York, 17 November 2016 – Today, on the eve of Universal Children’s Day, International children’s rights organisation KidsRights has announced the three finalists for the International Children’s Peace Prize 2016. From a record number of 120 international entries, the Expert Committee chose Divina from Cameroon, Kehkashan from the United Arab Emirates and Muzoon from Syria. According to the Committee, all three have improved the rights and position of children in unique and tangible ways. Every year, the young prize-winner gains an international platform to share his or her message with hundreds of millions of people worldwide. In line with tradition, the Children’s Peace Prize will be awarded by a Nobel Peace Laureate. This year, Nobel Peace Prize winner of 2006 Muhammad Yunus will present the prize in the Hall of Knights (Ridderzaal) in international city of peace and justice The Hague on 2 December, in the presence of the world press and numerous prominent guests.

International praise

Nobel Peace Laureate Yunus today expressed his great admiration for the fact that these children from a young age have been fighting for a fairer world:

“I congratulate the three finalists of the International Children’s Peace Prize 2016 and thank them for their invaluable contributions to children’s rights and sustainable peace. Our world desperately needs young changemakers like Divina, Kehkashan and Muzoon, who through their work have proved just how powerful and resilient children are. Adults do not have all the answers. Decision-makers should and must listen to the opinions of children, who have the power to ignite change and move the world.”

– Nobel Peace Laureate Muhammad Yunus

The finalists

Divina Maloum (12 years old, Cameroon, theme: peace) launched the *I am standing up for peace* movement in Cameroon after learning about the impact of extremist violence in her region. Divina educates other children on the dangers of violence and radicalisation, urging them to fight for peace. Although the programme has already reached 5,000 children in her own country, Divina remains ambitious. She aims to use her nomination to continue her actions beyond the borders of her own country. In this, Divina is backed by the organisation that nominated her for the Children’s Peace Prize: *Réseau des Jeunes Leaders des Nations Unies*.



Read more about Divina

Kehkashan Basu (16 years old, United Arab Emirates, theme: environment) began campaigning to protect the environment at an early age. At the age of just eight, she organised an awareness-raising campaign for the recycling of waste in her neighbourhood in Dubai. In 2012, she founded her own organisation, *Green Hope*, which runs waste-collection, beach-cleaning and awareness-raising campaigns. Through a series of campaigns and lectures, she has demonstrated to thousands of school and university students how important it is to care properly for the environment. Kehkashan has addressed various international conferences and Green Hope is now active in ten countries with more than 1,000 young volunteers. Kehkashan was nominated by her father.



Find out more about Kehkashan

Muzoon Almellehan (18 years old, Syria, theme: child refugees) was nominated for the Children's Peace Prize by Children's Peace Prize winner and Nobel Peace Laureate Malala Yousafzai and The Malala Fund. Muzoon comes from Syria, but the ongoing war forced her to flee her home country with her family three years ago. In a refugee camp in Jordan, she soon set up a campaign to provide girls in the camp better access to quality education. She also campaigned against the forced marriage of very young girls. In the refugee camp, Muzoon went from tent to tent to talk to children and parents. She succeeded in convincing many parents to send their daughters to school. Her courageous work has attracted international media attention and she has met several world leaders to discuss the problems in refugee camps. Since the summer of 2016, Muzoon and her family have been living in the United Kingdom.



Read more about Muzoon



About the International Children's Peace Prize

The International Children's Peace Prize is awarded annually to a child who fights courageously for children's rights. Every year, the message of the new young winner has enormous impact and demonstrates to millions of people globally that change is possible. In 2016 the prize will be awarded for the 12th consecutive year. Previous winners include Nkosi Johnson, who fought for the rights of children with hiv/aids, and Malala Yousafzai, who won the International Children's Peace Prize in 2013. Last year's winner was Abraham M. Keita from Liberia. By winning the award he has gained an international platform which enabled him to spread his powerful message of justice for children who are victims of violence among an audience of hundreds of millions of people worldwide.

The International Children's Peace Prize was founded by Mr. Marc Dullaert, founder and chair of the KidsRights Foundation. It was launched in 2005 during the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates in Rome, chaired by Mikhail Gorbachev. During the nomination process the Expert Committee of the prize receives nominations from countries all over the world. Very remarkable, but often unknown, brave children have been discovered through the annual nomination process.

Each year the International Children's Peace Prize is presented by a Nobel Peace Laureate. The winner receives the statuette 'Nkosi', which portrays a child setting the world in motion, as well as a study grant and a worldwide platform to promote his or her ideals and causes for the benefit of children's rights. Furthermore, KidsRights invests the sum of €100,000 in projects in the winner's home country that are closely connected to his or her area of work. Please visit the website for more information about the International Children's Peace Prize:

<http://www.childrenspeaceprize.org>.

[Use the links above to download French and Dutch press releases, as well as a general Q&A about the KidsRights Foundation]

Additional information for media

Media are cordially invited to attend the award ceremony on 9 November in The Hague. A separate invitation will be sent closer to the time. There are also opportunities for media to interview either Marc Dullaert, founder and chair of KidsRights, or this year's three finalists. Please address interview requests or other media inquiries to KidsRights' media relations officers:



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About KidsRights Foundation

KidsRights is an international non-governmental organization that promotes the wellbeing of very vulnerable children across the world and advocates the realisation of their rights.

KidsRights strives for a world where all children have access to their rights and are enabled to realise the great potential they carry within them. KidsRights sees children as changemakers with the power to move the world, and facilitates in voicing their opinions and taking action in order to bring about change. KidsRights supports children by commanding global attention for the realisation of children's rights and acting as a catalyst to ignite change, together with children and youths. We support this with research and action. In order to gain insight into the status of children's rights, KidsRights frequently conducts research. The foundation also finances local projects aimed at directly improving the rights of vulnerable children and stimulating child participation and change-making by youths. Please visit our website to find out more about KidsRights: <http://www.kidsrights.org>.



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