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LEYNER PALACIOS ASPRILLA OF COLOMBIA SELECTED AS FINALIST FOR GLOBAL PLURALISM AWARD

GLOBAL CENTRE FOR PLURALISM ANNOUNCES ADVOCATE FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHTS OF CONFLICT VICTIMS IS A TOP CANDIDATE FOR PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

NEW YORK – June 20, 2017 – In recognition of outstanding achievements to support more inclusive societies worldwide, the [Global Centre for Pluralism](http://WWW.PLURALISM.CA/EN/), an international education and research organization founded by His Highness the Aga Khan and the Government of Canada, announced the 10 finalists for the 2017 Global Pluralism Award. Selected by a renowned international jury, Leyner Palacios Asprilla of Colombia was chosen as a finalist for this year's inaugural award for his work to fight for the rights of the Colombian conflict victims.

"We are witnessing societies worldwide becoming more deeply divided. The need for respect and acceptance across differences is all the more urgent," said John McNee, Secretary General of the Global Centre for Pluralism. "The work of the 10 finalists of the Global Pluralism Award, and all the nominees, is a testament to what can be achieved when pluralism is put into practice."

The international Award jury, chaired by the Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, former Prime Minister of Canada, is comprised of five independent members from various disciplines. They reviewed over 200 nominations from 43 countries. After careful consideration, the finalists were selected for their extraordinary, innovative work to advance respect for diversity.

Leyner Palacios Asprilla founded the Comité por los Derechos de las Víctimas de Bojayá ("Committee for the Rights of Victims of Bojayá"), giving voice to over 11,000

victims of the Colombian conflict that live in the municipality of Bojayá, Chocó, one of the poorest regions of Colombia. The Committee has united 34 semi-autonomous Emberá Amerindian communities and 18 Afro-Colombian communities in their common struggle to end the Colombian conflict.

Palacios Asprilla's role with the Comité allowed him to represent Bojayá's massacre victims during the peace negotiations between the FARC and the Colombian government. Palacios Asprilla also fought for the government to get local community leaders' consent before embarking on any development or extraction projects on their land.

Of the 10 finalists, three winners will be recognized at the inaugural Global Pluralism Award Ceremony, which takes place in the fall in Ottawa, Canada. Each winner will receive \$50,000 to further their work.

About the Global Centre for Pluralism

Founded in Ottawa by His Highness the Aga Khan in partnership with the Government of Canada, the Global Centre for Pluralism is an independent, charitable organization. Inspired by Canada's experience as a diverse and inclusive country, the Centre was created to advance positive responses to the challenge of living peacefully and productively together in diverse societies.

Members of the Award Jury

- The Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, former Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister of Canada (Jury Chair)
- Dante Caputo (Argentina), Member of the Council of the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights of Argentina; former Minister of Foreign Affairs in Argentina
- Bience Gawanas (Namibia), Special Advisor to the Minister of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, Namibia; former Commissioner for Social Affairs at the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government
- Naheed Nenshi (Canada), Mayor of Calgary

- Pascale Thumerelle (France), former Vice-President, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility, Vivendi, a global integrated industrial group in media and content

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