

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### CHAMPIONS OF PLURALISM CELEBRATED AT THE 2017 GLOBAL PLURALISM AWARD CEREMONY

#### INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION HOSTS AWARD CEREMONY TO RECOGNIZE TEN RECIPIENTS FOR THEIR DEDICATION TO BUILDING MORE INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

**OTTAWA, ON – November 16, 2017** – Last night, His Highness the Aga Khan, Chairman of the [Global Centre for Pluralism](http://www.pluralism.ca), presented the inaugural [Global Pluralism Award](#) during a ceremony at the Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat in Ottawa, Canada with the Rt. Hon. Beverley McLachlin, Chief Justice of Canada. The three winners, Leyner Palacios of Colombia, Alice Nderitu of Kenya and Daniel Webb of Australia, were recognized alongside seven honourable mentions for their unparalleled and sustained commitment to building more inclusive, peaceful societies.

Speaking at the ceremony, His Highness the Aga Khan said, “The example set by others can be a powerful source of inspiration — and that is why the Global Centre for Pluralism has established these awards. Their essential purpose is to share the power of inspiring examples with an ever-wider community of pluralism all across our world, a community that will then create a growing momentum for inclusion - rather than exclusion – as a way to respond to the changes of our world.”

“Pluralism is the deliberate choice to respect and value diversity,” said the Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, former Prime Minister of Canada and Chair of the Award Jury. “Through their accomplishments, each of the finalists has demonstrated that welcoming diversity has positive outcomes for all – peace, reconciliation and a better life.”

Each of the winners was presented with \$50,000 CAD from the Global Centre for Pluralism to further their work in support of pluralism.

The Global Pluralism Award, a new prize from the Global Centre for Pluralism, was envisioned by His Highness the Aga Khan to celebrate extraordinary examples of pluralism in action. The Award was launched in a year that is significant for both the Centre's founders – His Highness the Aga Khan and the Government of Canada.

His Highness the Aga Khan is commemorating his Diamond Jubilee, marking 60 years as the spiritual leader of Shia Ismaili Muslims and of building institutions dedicated to improving quality of life. And, Canadians have marked 150 years since Confederation – a milestone that has generated considerable reflection about the country's history, its relationship to indigenous peoples and its defining characteristics.

Nominations for the 2019 Award will be accepted starting in the spring of 2018.

**Award Winners:**

**Leyner Palacios, Comité por los Derechos de las Víctimas de Bojayá, Colombia**

Fighting for the rights of Colombian conflict victims for over 20 years, Leyner Palacios of Colombia has given a voice to over 11,000 people living in the municipality of Bojayá, Chocó, one of the poorest and most isolated regions of Colombia. The Global Pluralism Award recognizes this community leader and human rights advocate for his work to defend the rights of marginalized afro-Colombian and indigenous communities, as Colombia pursues a peace and reconciliation process following 52 years of civil conflict.

**Alice Nderitu, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Kenya**

Alice Nderitu of Kenya is a peacemaker, conflict mediator and gender equality advocate who negotiates behind the scenes with African leaders at the highest levels to prevent violence, particularly leading up to elections. Using both traditional and modern approaches to peacemaking through mediation, she has brokered peace throughout Africa. She was selected by the jury to showcase the importance of an approach to peacemaking that values diversity, allowing the interests, values and participation of different groups to be respected and included.

## **Daniel Webb, Human Rights Law Centre, Australia**

A leader in defending the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, Australian human rights lawyer, Daniel Webb, has helped shift public opinion by focusing on the voices and human stories of refugees and asylum seekers being sent to offshore detention centres under the Australian government's policies. Having led legal cases and advocacy campaigns preventing the deportation of hundreds of men, women and children to offshore detention centres on the islands of Manus and Nauru, Webb is being recognized for his efforts to raise awareness about policies that are a threat to inclusive societies.

### **Honourable Mentions:**

ATD Quart Monde, France  
BeAnotherLab, Spain  
Fundación Construir, Bolivia  
Hand Talk, Brazil  
Sawa for Development and Aid, Lebanon  
Wapikoni Mobile, Canada  
Welcoming America, United States

### **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.

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