

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA STORY & LIVESTREAMED EVENT NOTICE: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22, 2016 at 1:10pm Eastern Daylight Time

## **Leading Organizers of Anti-Corruption and Anti-Slavery Movements in Africa to Receive Awards for Leadership in Nonviolent Action**

Boston/Medford, Massachusetts, June 20, 2016 – Popular nonviolent movements for democracy and human rights have captured headlines in recent years in Hong Kong, Ukraine, Guatemala, Burkina Faso, and the United States.

Yet for every struggle that gains international media attention, there are many more critically important ones that are not widely known. This Wednesday, two such movements will be recognized for their outstanding use of civil resistance to challenge injustices that impact millions worldwide: corruption and slavery.

In Mauritania, the Initiative for the Resurgence of the Abolitionist Movement (IRA) is at the forefront of a nonviolent struggle against slavery that has led to the liberation of thousands from Mauritania's system of coerced servitude. Despite arrests of its leadership, IRA continues its work to free slaves and end discrimination against oppressed groups in Mauritanian society.

In Kenya, HAKI Africa and Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI) are leading organizations that empower and mobilize communities to engage in grassroots nonviolent action to end corruption, impunity, poverty, and marginalization as experienced by regular people in Mombasa and the coastal region.

All three organizations have been subject to harsh government repression for their actions.

The James Lawson Award is named after Rev. James Lawson, one of the foremost strategists of the US Civil Rights Movement, who led the 1960 Nashville Lunch Counter Sit-ins, trained leaders in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and organized numerous other nonviolent campaigns from the 1960s onward. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. referred to Lawson as "the leading theorist and strategist of nonviolence in the world".

Receiving the awards on behalf of their organizations are Coumba Dada Kane (Vice President of IRA-Mauritania), Hussein Khalid (Executive Director of HAKI Africa), and Hassan Abdille (Executive Director of MUHURI). Rev. Lawson will also be present and make remarks.

On giving the award, Hardy Merriman, President of the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict (ICNC) stated: "We are deeply honored to present the Lawson Award to these three courageous, strategic, and inspiring organizations. Each of them is shaping their societies for the better, and their efforts are a model for others around the world striving to achieve their rights, freedom, and justice."

The award will be presented at the 11th annual ICNC Summer Institute at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy near Boston, Massachusetts, USA. The Summer Institute brings together international professionals, activists and scholars for an intensive week-long program of learning about nonviolent civil resistance. The ceremony for the James Lawson Award will take place on Wednesday, June 22 at 1:10pm EDT. For more information on how to view the livestream, visit [www.nonviolent-conflict.org](http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org), follow @nvconflict on Twitter, or like ICNC's [Facebook page](#).

Contact: Amber French, Manager of Editorial Initiatives, International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, [afrench@nonviolent-conflict.org](mailto:afrench@nonviolent-conflict.org) or (985) 705-2402.