

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD "EMILIO MIGNONE"

PALACIO SAN MARTÍN

17 DECEMBER 2012, 11 am

**DRAFT ADDRESS BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE ARGENTINE
REPUBLIC**

Members of Emilio Mignone's family,
Representatives of the Human Rights Movement of Argentina,
Ambassadors of the Republic of Indonesia, of the United States and of the Republic of
El Salvador,
Authorities and representatives of the Diplomatic Corps,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a source of immense satisfaction for me to be hosting the ceremony for the sixth annual edition of the International Human Rights Award "Emilio Fermín Mignone", named after an indefatigable fighter and key figure in Argentina's human rights movement.

The Argentine Republic celebrates in 2013 the 30th anniversary of the restoration of democracy. Since then, our country has incorporated the protection and promotion of human rights as an essential value of its domestic and foreign policy in response to mass and systematic human rights violations suffered during the years of State terrorism.

Throughout this period we have made great headway, such as the work of the National Committee on Enforced Disappearance and the Trial against the Juntas, which were the first efforts in the field, and served as an example for other parts of the world that followed suit. We also suffered some setbacks, such as the adoption of the impunity and amnesty laws, which frustrated the legitimate expectations of memory, truth and justice of thousands of victims and family members.

Since May 2003, we have seen the removal of legal obstacles to the identification and punishment of those responsible for human rights violations during those tragic times. And this unprecedented process has led to hundreds of prosecutions and convictions that have been imposed by ordinary courts, applying criminal law, international human rights law and with full respect for due process guarantees.

The eradication of impunity is the platform for us to develop the present and future agenda for the expansion of rights in Argentina, with a social inclusion strategy that encompasses same-sex marriage, gender identity and new immigration laws, among other areas that have seen progress and are well-known. This is the bridge that, based on a new social contract, links our past to our future.

This is the background of the International Human Rights Award "Emilio Mignone" is framed, which I am proud to confer today for the first time on an Asian non-governmental organization: The Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence, otherwise known as "KONTRAS".

Founded in 1998, in a context of regional financial crisis and growing rifts under Suharto's rule, and building upon the combination of several non-governmental organizations, KONTRAS can be regarded as the dean of Indonesian human rights organizations, in view of both its prestige and outreach, and is an example for the development of similar organizations in Asia.

KONTRAS works to raise awareness as to the local situation vis-à-vis religious liberties, impunity, protection of the rights of children, women, persons with disabilities and migrant workers.

As in the case of Argentine non-governmental organizations, KONTRAS contributes to its country's commitment to human rights. Its positive actions have led Indonesia to sign the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, with ratification still pending. It has also contributed to Indonesia becoming a member of the Human Rights Council.

The process of nominations for the Award is very comprehensive, as it involves all our Embassies, and very important nominations are received, which are rigorously analyzed by the Selection Committee. In this context, this year we have also decided to acknowledge the work of the other two organizations that were short-listed: the Human Rights Institute of Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas" (IDHUCA) from El Salvador, and "Refugees International", from the United States of America.

As a result of the armed conflict that struck El Salvador between 1980 and 1992, in 1985 Jesuit father Segundo Montes Mozo created IDHUCA as a university institute that would assume the commitment to interpret El Salvador's reality and influence it to build a society based on full respect for human dignity. In 1989, IDHUCA was delivered a heavy blow with the killing of six Jesuit priests and two collaborators, and focused part of its work on solving this case. But it also decided to become an essential player in the construction and consolidation of the two permanent institutions responsible for guaranteeing respect for human rights: The National Civil Police (PNC) and the Prosecutor's Office for the Defense of Human Rights (PDDH), also providing training to public officials and legal assistance to victims.

"Refugees International", on its part, is a leading organization in advocating a solution to the crises of refugees and for assistance, relief and protection for displaced populations, promoting solutions and early response in order to enhance stability in several conflict-hit regions. Thanks to this organization, abandoned persons receive food, medicines, education and a legal status, and displaced families can return home. Since its establishment in 1979, the organization has grown and now provides support to refugees in Asia, Central America and Africa.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In 2013, Argentina will sit both on the Security Council and on the Human Rights Council. We will assume both positions with great responsibility, which compels us to have a global vision of the interdependence of all the actors that build the international agenda. This vision has inspired us to use this occasion, the "Emilio Mignone" Award, to encourage the three organizations invited to our country to share their experiences. An "Interregional Dialogue on Human Rights" is scheduled for tomorrow with

representatives of the State and of non-governmental organizations of Argentina, which will make it possible to learn more about the work of the guest organizations and share an analysis of the different regional realities in the field of human rights.

Argentina understands that the expansion of rights is the best strategy to achieve true development and overcome any economic, social or political crisis.

That is what this Award is about, as well as other similar actions that connect us to the world and enhance the capacity of Argentine society as a whole to contribute to the progressive development of international human rights law. It is about engaging in dialogue with peoples and governments in order to build a better and fairer world.

Thank you.

TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH. Buenos Aires, 17 December 2012.