

Prof. Ramin Jahanbegloo wins UN Peace Prize

PEN Canada Board member and distinguished scholar and author Ramin Jahanbegloo was awarded the Peace Prize from the United Nations Association of Spain. He received the honour in Barcelona in October 2009.

For the last thirty years, the UN Peace Prize has been awarded to individuals whose work promotes and defends human rights and helps to further the objectives of the United Nations. Past winners include Nobel laureates Nelson Mandela and Mikhail Gorbachev, and former Swedish prime minister Olof Palme.

An internationally respected philosopher and political theorist, renowned for his work on the intellectual origins of non-violence, Jahanbegloo currently teaches Political Science at the University of Toronto. He is the author and editor of more than 20 books in English, French and Persian, including *Conversations With Isaiah Berlin* (1992) and *Iran: Between Tradition and Modernity* (2004). From 2001 to 2006, Jahanbegloo headed the Department of Contemporary Studies at the Cultural Research Centre in Tehran and from 2006-2007, he was Rajni Kothari Professor of Democracy at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies in New Delhi, India.

In April 2006 Jahanbegloo was arrested in Tehran on suspicion of inciting revolution. He was placed in solitary confinement in Evin prison for four months, but never formally charged. He was later released on bail.

Speaking to the University of Toronto *Bulletin*, Jahanbegloo said the award had made him feel that "I'm on the right path after fighting, struggling and teaching nonviolence for nearly 30 years. . . . I grew up [in Iran] surrounded by injustice and repression—my father was in prison when I was born. By the time I left to study in France when I was 17 years old, I was preparing to absorb the philosophy of nonviolence."