



## EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon

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### PRESS RELEASE

## **SAMIR KASSIR AWARD FOR FREEDOM OF THE PRESS**

### **The European Union rewards a Jordanian and an Egyptian journalist, winners of the 2012 edition**

The Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon, Ambassador Angelina Eichhorst, granted today, in the presence of Mrs. Gisele Khoury-Kassir, President of the Samir Kassir Foundation, the Samir Kassir Award for Freedom of the Press to the winners of the 2012 edition:

- **Suleiman al-Khalidi**, a Jordanian journalist, won the prize in the "Opinion Article" category for his article: **"Shattered humanity inside Syria's security apparatus"** published in English by Reuters on 26 May 2011. The article is a rare opinion piece, based on the visceral and brutal experience of the journalist. Al-Khalidi's experiences all culminate in his conclusion in a way that makes it both universal and deeply personal: "I am haunted by the human cost of the Arab uprisings for people seeking the sort of freedoms which others elsewhere in the world take for granted".
- **Pakinam Amer**, an Egyptian journalist, won the prize in the "Investigative Report" category for her article: **"The curious case of Reda Hilal"** published in English in Al Masry Al Youm daily on 1 July 2011. The article provides a detailed and well structured investigation into the case of a disappeared Egyptian journalist. While dealing with an extremely sensitive issue, the article handles the subject matter boldly and with finesse. Moreover the article manages to elegantly capture the emotions and frustrations that must be faced by the friends and families of thousands in similar situations, in Egypt and elsewhere.

The Samir Kassir Award for Freedom of the Press is granted by the European Union, and rewards journalists who have distinguished themselves through the quality of their work and their commitment to democracy and the rule of law. Organised every year since 2006, the Samir Kassir Award honours the memory of the Lebanese journalist Samir Kassir who was assassinated on 2 June 2005 in Beirut. The competition is open to 18 countries in North Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf. This year, 160 applications were submitted. The award in the two categories is worth €10 000.

Ambassador Angelina Eichhorst said: "The Award was set up in 2006 by the European Union to restate our commitment to the memory of Samir Kassir, to his battle for freedom of expression, and, through his name, to all those who continue to fight for their freedoms. This 7<sup>th</sup> edition takes place while many journalists, particularly in this region, continue to pay a heavy toll for their work". Drawing attention to the special significance of the 2012 edition of the Samir Kassir Award, she remarked: "As the Arab uprisings continue to be at the centre of the news, sadly, many journalists and other media professionals continue to pay a high price for their coverage. In this region and since the uprisings, every 12 days a media professional has been killed".

As in previous years, an independent jury selected the winners. It was composed of seven personalities from amongst the Arab and European press : Lorenzo Trombetta, ANSA Middle East correspondent; Anne-Marie el Hage, journalist in the Lebanese French speaking daily L'Orient-Le Jour; Saad Tazi, Editor in Chief of the Moroccan French speaking daily web portal Le Soir Echos; the Jordanian journalist and analyst Lamis Andoni; Hisham Kassem, founder of Al Masry Al Youm Egyptian daily and chairman of the Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights; Lassaad Ben Ahmed, specialised in social issues in Tunisia; and Gabriel Deek, an academic and social activist, representative of the Samir Kassir Foundation.

All information about the 2012 edition of the Samir Kassir Award for Freedom of the Press and the articles of Sulaiman al-Khalidi and Pakinam Amer are available on the website [www.samirkassiraward.org](http://www.samirkassiraward.org)

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