



## 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 three journalists from Syria, Egypt and Lebanon, winners of the 2013 edition**

The Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon granted today, in collaboration with the Samir Kassir Foundation, the Samir Kassir Award for Freedom of the Press to the winners of the 2013 edition:

- **Doha Hassan, a Palestinian-Syrian journalist**, won the prize in the "Opinion Article" category for her article **"Militarised Youth"** published on 23 January 2013 in Arabic on NOW. The article is an opinion piece based on the journalist's experience regarding the autocracy in the education system in Syria: "You learn to keep silent at a time when students in other countries learn how to deal with adulthood".
- **Ahmed Abu Draa, an Egyptian journalist**, won the prize in the "Investigative Report" category for his article **"African Smuggling Gangs Turn Sinai into Torture Land"** published on 11 July 2012 in Arabic in Al Masry Al Youm daily. The article provides a description of the treacherous track for African migrants in search of a better life: "What brought us to this stage is the practices followed by these smugglers of selling us to other smugglers, and we paid bribes to each of them, and so on, until we were about to die of starvation and torture".
- **Luna Safwan, a Lebanese journalist**, won the prize in the "Audiovisual Report" category for her report **"Daily Life of Syrian Refugees in Aarsal"** aired on 24 January 2013 on Orient TV. The report shows the extremely difficult conditions of families that came to Lebanon fleeing the conflict in Syria.

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 countries in North Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf. This year, over 150 applications were submitted. The award in each of the three categories is worth €10 000.

Ambassador Angelina Eichhorst said: "The entries received demonstrate that journalists have the courage and determination to unveil human rights violations". She also underlined the "rejuvenation and reinvigoration of the response: 70% of the finalists are women and 60% under 30 years old" participating in a "unique award that breaks down ideological barriers bringing together journalists from the Middle East and the Gulf".

As in previous years, an independent jury selected the winners. It was composed of seven personalities: Shirine Abdallah, founding member of the Samir Kassir Foundation; Ghazanfar Ali Khan, senior journalist at Arab News, the largest English daily of the Gulf; Geraldine Coughlan, journalist specialised in international justice; Philippe Dessaint, director of International Events at TV5 Monde; Sami Moubayed, visiting scholar with the Carnegie Endowment Centre; Diana Moukalled, web editor at the Lebanon-based Future Television; and Samia Nakhoul, Middle East news editor for Thomson Reuters.

All information about the 2013 edition of the Samir Kassir Award for Freedom of the Press, the winning articles and audiovisual report are available on the website [www.samirkassiraward.org](http://www.samirkassiraward.org)

### **Contact**

Bouchra Chahine, Tel: +961 1 56 94 00 ext. 271

[bouchra.chahine@eeas.europa.eu](mailto:bouchra.chahine@eeas.europa.eu)

Maria Sanchez-Gil-Cepeda, Tel: +961 1 56 94 00 ext. 270

[maria.sanchez-gil-cepeda@eeas.europa.eu](mailto:maria.sanchez-gil-cepeda@eeas.europa.eu)