



# GRUBER FOUNDATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Yanar Mohammed

## Yanar Mohammed, two other activists, to share 2008 Gruber Foundation Women's Rights Prize

Iraqi activist and organization she founded sheltered victims of  
domestic abuse while seeking equality for women

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July 8, 2008, New York, NY – The Peter and Patricia Gruber Foundation (PPGF) today announced that **Yanar Mohammed** of Iraq will share its 2008 Women's Rights Prize with two other women's rights activists – **Sapana Pradhan Malla** of Nepal and **Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian** of Israel – in a ceremony to be held this fall. The three will share the \$500,000 prize.

Unable to forget the faces of the women and young girls she witnessed being victimized and humiliated in the name of culture and tradition, Yanar Mohammed dedicated herself to achieving gender equality and integrity for the women of Iraq. She and the organization she founded – Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq – have sheltered women from what are referred to as honor killings, helped stop trafficking, and saved women and young girls from prostitution. She estimates that she has saved 35 women from certain death. Mohammed has also interviewed about 200 women held in prison and brought their horrible conditions to the government's attention. Their efforts results led to saving one person from a death sentence. The publisher of *Al Mousawat*, a newspaper calling for full equality for women, she dreams of one day spreading the message of gender equality in the Middle East through another medium, an Iraqi women's television channel.

**Yanar Mohammed** was born in Baghdad in 1960. She graduated from Baghdad University in 1984 and received a Master's degree in Architecture in 1993. Although her work on behalf of Iraqi women has placed her own life in danger, Yanar Mohammed continues to believe that the world that she and all Iraqi women are entitled to is a world worth fighting for. She is the founder of Defense of Iraqi Women's Rights, which advocates full equality for Iraqi women through active involvement in political debate. In 2003, she co-founded Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq to help achieve full equality for women in post-war Iraq. The publisher of *Al Mousawat*, a newspaper calling for full equality for women, Mohammed has opened two women's shelters (in Baghdad and Kirkuk) and several safe houses to protect women threatened by domestic abuse and what is referred to as honor killing. The shelters have protected numerous women who, under fundamentalist practice and tribal law, face threats to their lives. Since August 2005, she has offered courses to instruct women activists in how to confront local tradition, tribalism, and religious intolerance. She dreams of giving a voice to Iraqi women through their own television channel, embodying a new wave of progressive feminism that can spread throughout the Middle East.

**The Peter and Patricia Gruber Foundation Women's Rights Prize** is presented to an individual or group that has made significant contributions, often at great personal or professional risk, to furthering the rights of women and girls in any area and to advancing public awareness of the need for gender equality to achieve a just world.

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*2008 Gruber Women's Rights Prize...2*

In addition to the cash award, Ms. Mohammed, Ms. Pradhan Malla, and Dr. Shalhoub-Kevorkian will each receive a gold medal.

The official citation reads:

*The 2008 Gruber Women's Rights Prize is proudly presented to: Yanar Mohammed, Sapana Pradhan Malla, and Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, three activists devoted to enhancing women's rights and empowering women under the most difficult conditions of armed conflict and war.*

*Yanar Mohammed, co-founder of the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI), for fighting tirelessly to stop the eradication of women's rights in Iraq. OWFI is a women's organization that has continued to speak out openly for women's rights against all odds.*

*Sapana Pradhan Malla, a member of Nepal's Constituent Assembly, for fighting to include women's human rights in the constitution and, as a member of the Forum for Women, Law & Development (FWLD), for leading the successful effort to decriminalize abortion and to criminalize marital rape.*

*Dr. Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, a Palestinian feminist activist and researcher, for concentrating on sexual abuse and femicide, a term she coined for the abuse that puts women in a state of living death during times of war.*

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