

Forced to become a child soldier at 12, Junior Nzita Nsuami beats odds and receives prestigious Mother Teresa Memorial Award

Mother Teresa Memorial Award recognises and awards unsung social heroes doing exemplary work in their field of social justice.



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Ex-Child Soldier Junior Nzita Nsuami was awarded the Mother Teresa Memorial Award for Social Justice in a special award acceptance ceremony and press conference at the Geneva Press Club. The award was presented by Dr. Abraham Mathai, Founder and Chairman of Harmony Foundation, the organiser of Mother Teresa Memorial Awards for Social Justice, who flew down from Mumbai, India to personally give the award to Junior Nzita Nsuami. The event was also attended by UN representatives

and dignitaries.

Although there are many awards that felicitate achievements in different spheres, there are hardly any that recognise unsung heroes who are making a tangible difference in obscurity and therefore in furtherance to the ethos upheld by Mother Teresa this award was instituted. In fact, even renowned peace prizes like the Nobel often have a dark past. Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite, a lethal weapon that is used even today, in remorse during his last days bequeathed the fortune he had amassed from this evil enterprise and funded the eponymous prize. On the other hand, this award instituted in the memory of Mother Teresa espouses her ethos of selflessness and virtues of compassion as she was the epitome of social justice and peace globally.

Junior Nzita Nsuami was chosen for this prestigious award for his exemplary work in rehabilitation of children previously engaged in armed combat and rescued from militias commanded by warlords.

Speaking of the occasion, Dr. Mathai said, “Junior’s truly remarkable and inspiring story offers great hope and optimism to many of the children captured by warlords and made into child soldiers. His journey tells us that the possibility of their freedom and eventual redemption is not just a mirage, but a concrete and tangible reality. He is living proof of how a child soldier, carrying a gun instead of a school bag, a bayonet for a pen and ammunition instead of school books can be like a phoenix rising from its ashes... It is Harmony Foundation’s great honour and pleasure to confer the Mother Teresa Memorial Award to Mr. Junior Nzita Nsuami. We felicitate him for his achievements for striving to abolish this form of enslavement and exploitation. In the long run, his consistent campaign will ensure that the provisions of the Geneva Convention are adhered to and punishment under international law meted out to its violators.”

Accepting the award, Junior said, “I endured the most horrible things a child can endure. That is why, after my demobilisation I opted to peacefully combat social injustice and in particular the despicable reality of the recruitment of children for armed conflict.”

Junior Nzita Nsuami is an ex-child soldier, survivor and today an international campaigner who has devoted his life to save other child soldiers. He was conscripted at the age of twelve, forced to fight the regime of Mobutu Sese Seko. In 2006, he signed his official demobilization papers and moved away from the dark life of combat.

He launched "Peace for Children" association which provides moral and material support to those children who are rejected by their own societies and is currently supporting around 150 young children in Kinshasa, with strong support from Switzerland.

In 2013, Junior became UN ambassador for 'children in combat', and is a champion for child soldiers rehabilitation across the world.

About Mother Teresa Memorial Awards & Harmony Foundation:

An award with a 15-year legacy, Mumbai-based Harmony Foundation organises an annual awards ceremony honouring excellence in the social sphere. It recognises international social crusaders and is one of the most respected and coveted awards in the field of social welfare and justice. Established in 2005, this year’s Mother Teresa Awards spanned over 4 continents and over a dozen countries. The award is the only one endorsed by Sr. Prema, the Superior General of the Missionaries of Charity,

Kolkata. A few of the previous recipients of this prestigious award have been Ms. Malala Yousufzai, H.H. The Dalai Lama, the current Ghanaian President Nana Akufo-Addo, Prime Minister of Malaysia Dr. Mahathir Mohamad; former Deputy Speaker of the UK's House of Lords Baroness Caroline Cox and Aid Groups like Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) and White Helmets.

This year's laureates include social workers such as Alezandra Russell (Urban Light), Rob Williams (War Child UK) and Evelien Holsken (Save a Girl) as well as organisations like Prerana and Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting (DAFOH).

The Harmony Foundation is an international NGO, was founded in October of 2005, with its raison d'être being the establishment and strengthening of social cohesion among various communities and to work towards the benefit of all without any discrimination- whether it be religion, creed, sex or their origins. The establishment of this foundation was necessitated by the fact that we are presently living in a very turbulent time in the history of mankind. Many wicked acts are being perpetrated under the guise of political, economic, religious reasons which have long-term implications on the peaceful co-existence of human society.



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