



2019 Nuremberg International Human Rights Award

On Sunday, 21 October, 2018, the jury of the Nuremberg International Human Rights Award, chaired by the Lord Mayor of the City of Nuremberg, Dr Ulrich Maly, met in Nuremberg City Hall and came to the following decision concerning the thirteenth award:

The award winner is Mr Rodrigo Mundaca from Chile

The Award will be presented in Nuremberg Opera House on Sunday, 22 September, 2019.

The jury gave the following reasons for its decision:

For years, Rodrigo Mundaca has fought for free access to water in the Petorca region, north of Santiago de Chile. He is an agricultural engineer working for the organisation MODATIMA (Movimiento de Defensa por el protección del Medio Ambiente/ Movement for the Protection of Access to Water, for Land Rights and for Environmental Protection) as its Secretary General. The Petorca region, the home region of Rodrigo Mundaca, is characterised by numerous water conflicts between agricultural industry businesses (mainly growing avocados and citrus fruit for export) on the one hand and small local farmers as well as the rural population on the other hand. In Chile, 90 per cent of water rights are privatised, which means that companies divert water from the rivers, mainly to avocado plantations and to private wells.

The fight for the right to water has been criminalised in Chile. Mundaca has therefore been restricted in his freedom of expression, he has been subject of criminal prosecution and he has been sentenced. In the years 2012-2014, he had to appear in court 24 times. Mundaca has been the victim of lasting intimidation, threats and persecutions. He has to live and work with the constant fear that he might be arrested. In 2015, he was beaten up in the street in broad daylight right in the centre of Santiago de Chile. The police have never investigated this case. In 2017, he received death threats, after publishing a report by Danwatch on the topic of "Water Robbery" in Chile and on the repercussions of large-scale avocado cultivation for the European market. Following this, he lived in hiding for a while, and a campaign was started with Amnesty International Chile to protect him and to attract more international attention to his case. Currently he is under police protection due to the seriousness of threats.

By awarding the 2019 Nuremberg International Human Rights Award, the jury honours an activist who with remarkable courage fights for the fundamental right to water. The jury hopes that the award will give Rodrigo Mundaca the protection necessary for continuing with his commitment with less risk to himself. On 28 June, 2010, the General Assembly of the United Nations acknowledged the right to clean water as a fundamental human right, with resolution 64/292, deducing it from the right to food. Nevertheless, around 660 million people worldwide do not have access to clean drinking water. If this important life resource is missing, many people are forced to leave their land, even if no direct physical violence was used against them. Furthermore, the jury would like to appeal to the consumers' conscience and to sensitise them for responsible consumption. The public has the right to know what negative repercussions are linked to the cultivation of e.g. avocados. Not least, the jury is committed to the United Nations' global sustainable development goals. In its Agenda 2030, development goal 6 stipulates that the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all must be ensured.

Nuremberg, 21 October 2018

