

**Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize to SOS MEDITERRANEE and Giuseppina Nicolini  
Awards Ceremony on Tuesday June 27th 2017 at UNESCO Headquarter in Paris**

The Félix Houphouët-Boigny Prize, established in 1989 by UNESCO, intends to honour living individuals and active public or private bodies or institutions that have made a significant contribution to promoting, seeking, safeguarding or maintaining peace, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitution of UNESCO.

The Jury of the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize has decided to award the Prize to the nongovernmental organization SOS MEDITERRANEE and Giuseppina Nicolini, former mayor of Lampedusa (Italy), for their work to save the lives of refugees and migrants and welcome them with dignity.

*“After examining conditions around the world, the Jury of the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize determined that refugees and migrants constitute one of the crucial issues of our day, notably in the Mediterranean where nearly 13,000 men, women and children have perished in shipwrecks since 2013,”* declares the acting President of the Jury, Joaquim Chissano, former President of Mozambique.

*“This exceptional distinction is a great honour for all the teams of SOS MEDITERRANEE who have worked tirelessly at sea for over 16 months to save lives. We dedicate it to all the victims of this tragedy that continues in the Central Mediterranean and call on all States to take responsibility for putting an end to this tragedy”,* says Sophie Beau, co-founder of SOS MEDITERRANEE.

The awards ceremony, will be held under the auspices of the Director-General of UNESCO, on Tuesday, 27 June 2017 at 14:00 at UNESCO in Paris. It will be preceded by a Press Conference:

Tuesday, June 27th at 10.30 at the UNESCO Headquarter, room IX

- \* Firmin Edouard MATOKO, assistant Director-General for the Africa Department of UNESCO
- \* SE Joaquim CHISSANO, President of the Jury of Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize and
- \* Sophie BEAU, co-founder of SOS MEDITERRANEE, vice-President of the international network and General Director of SOS MEDITERRANEE France
- \* Klaus VOGEL, co-founder and honorary President of SOS MEDITERRANEE International,
- \* Valeria CALANDRA, co-founder and President of SOS MEDITERRANEE Italy and
- \* Giuseppina NICOLINI, former mayor of Lampedusa

The press conference will be followed by a cocktail reception.

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*SOS MEDITERRANEE is a European organization for the rescue of people in distress at sea. It was founded in 2015 and launched its rescue operations in February 2016. Together with its medical partner Doctors Without Borders (MSF), the organization has assisted more than 19.000 people within its first year of rescue activities.*

*Past laureates of the Prize have included personalities such as French President François Hollande, Nelson Mandela and Frederik W. De Klerk; Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and Yasser Arafat; King Juan Carlos of Spain and former U.S.A. President, Jimmy Carter.*