



# The Right Livelihood Award

*for outstanding vision and work on behalf of our planet and its people*

## Munir (Indonesia)†

(2000)



Munir

*...for his courage and dedication in fighting for human rights and the civilian control of the military in Indonesia.*

Munir was born in 1965 and was active on human rights issues even as a law student. After obtaining a law degree from Brawijaya University, he worked for the East Java Branch of the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI), and during the 1990s was legal counsel for a number of victims of official violence and repression. He then led YLBHI's operational division.

Munir first came to public prominence at the end of the Suharto period through his role in the campaign that ensued when, in late 1997 and early '98, two dozen pro-democracy activists were abducted in suspicious circumstances. At the height of this campaign, Munir founded the human rights organisation Kontras (Commission for Disappearances and Victims of Violence) with the backing of 12 pro-democracy NGOs, including YLBHI. Initially the Co-ordinator of its Working Committee, Munir then chaired its Management Board.

Kontras focuses on fighting political violence, encouraging respect for due process of law, ensuring victims' physical and psychological recovery, and promoting reconciliation and peace. Kontras publishes a regular magazine which reports violence as soon as it takes place, and has a number of regional project offices. YLBHI and Kontras have also developed media education for the public on human rights through radio programmes.

In September 1999, Munir was appointed a member of the Commission to Investigate Human Rights Violations in East Timor (KPPHAM), set up by Indonesia's National Human Rights Commission. Its investigations produced a wealth of evidence of the Indonesian army's involvement in recruiting, financing, training and using the militia which caused such havoc at the time of the UN Referendum. Its report in early 2000 led to judicial investigations into the conduct of six senior army officers, including the former Chief of Staff, General Wiranto. Munir also taught human rights in police and army training, seminars and workshops, and was appointed to a drafting committee for law on human rights courts, which was meant to be presented to the Indonesian Parliament during 2000.

Munir was named Man of the Year by the leading Muslim periodical, UMMAT, and as a "young leader for the Millennium in Asia" by Asia Week in 2000. Kontras received the prestigious Yap Thiam Hien human rights award in 1998.

On September 7th 2004, Munir died on a flight from Indonesia to The Netherlands. The autopsy undertaken by the Dutch Forensic Institute discovered lethal levels of arsenic in his body. In 2008, Indonesian pilot Pollycarpus Budihari Priyanto was found guilty for the murder.

After the execution of Ogoni leader [Ken Saro-Wiwa](#) in Nigeria in 1995, this is the second time a laureate of the Right Livelihood Award has been murdered for the work he was doing. The Right Livelihood Award Foundation has made a [statement](#) about Munir's assassination.

### Quotation

*"Human rights in the sense of human solidarity has created a new universal and equal language going beyond racial, gender, ethnic or religious boundaries. That is why we consider it a doorway to dialogue for people of all socio-cultural groups and all ideologies."*

Munir

---

RIGHT LIVELIHOOD  
AWARD FOUNDATION