

Ovation for the Five Receiving Human Rights Award in U.S.

Ted Lewis, director of the Human Rights Program for Global Exchange said that more than 29,000 people had come to the website to vote for the 35 candidates, and Cuban Heroes got the most votes

By: Juventud Rebelde

Email: digital@juventudrebelde.cu

2014-05-10 | 17:49:20 EST

SAN FRANCISCO, California, May 9 - . One of the highest recognitions and tributes to the five Cuban fighters for peace, justice and a better world, wrongly convicted in the United States, took place in this city on the evening of Wednesday 8 May, when they were given the Global Exchange Award for Human Rights in the Selected by the People category.

Ted Lewis, director of the Human Rights Program at Global Exchange, presented the award to the Five and explained that more than 29,000 people had come to the website to vote for the 35 candidates, and the Five - Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González- were the ones who got the most votes in that category.

In April, when the result was announced, Global Exchange said in a statement that while the five are heroes of the Cuban people and they are known in many parts of the world, most American citizens are unaware of their case, and 'they were imprisoned in the United States on invented charges.'

María Eugenia Guerrero, affectionately known by family and friends as Maruchi, and sister of Antonio Guerrero, travelled to San Francisco to accept the award on behalf of the Five. This is the first time a family member of these anti-terrorist fighters has spoken publicly on behalf of them in the U.S., JR was informed, via email, by Alicia Jrapko coordinator of the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five in that country.

Before introducing Maruchi, Lewis said that the Five definitely deserved the prize, and to briefly explain the case presented the video in which Danny Glover describes who they are. Lewis said Obama can release them, adding that " he did not start this mess, but it can end it."

Alicia said that while Maruchi was walking to the stage to receive the award, the audience stood up and expressed their solidarity with an ovation for the Five, so the activist's view was that 'in a movement that is constantly trying to bring this case to the

light of day, the spontaneous reaction of the audience meant that they had managed to reach more people. "

In her address to those present, Maruchi thanked Global Exchange for having considered including the five in this ballot, explaining that while these fighters have received awards in many countries, this was the first time it had happened in the U.S., and the fact that it was a prize for Human Rights made it much more special.

Mirta said that her mother is 82 years old, and the clock is ticking. " She spends every minute of her life defending the cause of the Five and her greatest wish is to see her son and the others free," and concluded by calling on those present to join the Five Days for the Cuban Five, in Washington, the U.S. capital, from June 4 to 10.

Global Exchange also gave its National Award in honour of the 50th anniversary of the Freedom Schools, and it was received by Charlie Cobb, the visionary of Freedom Schools, and Phillip Agnew, executive director of Defenders of Dreams.

Meanwhile, the International Prize of the other categories, was awarded to María Estela Barco Huerta, an activist known for her work with genetically modified seeds, who has played a leading role in organizing exchanges for the learning of agro-ecology in Chiapas, Mexico.

The Twelfth Human Rights Award Ceremony by Global Exchange took place in the Palace of Fine Arts, a renowned monument near the entrance to San Francisco Bay, a palatial structure originally built for the Panama - Pacific exposition in 1915 and the exhibition of artworks.

See the special multimedia 15 Years of Injustice

Translated by ESTI