

**Asma wins UN human rights prize**

UNITED NATIONS: The late Asma Jahangir, a renowned human rights defender in Pakistan, was named on Friday by the United Nations as one of the winners of the 2018 UN Human Rights Prize.

Others who share the award include Tanzanian activist Rebeca Gyumi, Brazilian activist Joênia Wapichana and a human rights organisation, Front Line Defenders.

The “United Nations Prize in the Field of Human Rights” is an honorary award given for outstanding achievement in human rights, the UN said.

The award ceremony will be held in New York on Dec 10 on the World Human Rights Day.

Born in Lahore in January 1952, Ms Jahangir was the first woman to have served as president of the Supreme Court Bar Association. She was also the United Nations’ Rapporteur for Human Rights and a former chief of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP).

In a note of recognition, the UN said Ms Jahangir was known for speaking up against human rights violations and she was a staunch supporter of democracy.

An outspoken critic of military interference in civilian rule in Pakistan, Ms Jahangir wrote for many publications and authored two books. She died in Lahore due to cardiac arrest in February this year.

Tanzanian activist Rebeca Gyumi is the founder of Msichana Initiative, an organisation that works for empowering girls by improving their access to education.

She successfully challenged the constitutionality of the Tanzanian law that allowed girls to marry at the age of 14 and 15.

Joênia Wapichana was the first indigenous woman to be elected to Brazil’s Congress. She was the first indigenous person to graduate from a law school and also the first indigenous lawyer to speak in front of the Supreme Federal Court.

She was appointed the first president of the National Commission for the Defence of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Brazil in 2013.

Front Line Defenders, a human rights organisation founded in Ireland in 2001, was also named as one of the winners of the UN Human Rights Prize.

The organisation works for protection of human rights defenders at risk, people who work, non-violently, for any or all of the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Previous winners of the award included Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and former US President Jimmy Carter.

Masood Haider