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## A Champion of Freedom



by Nicole Kurokawa  
April 12, 2010, 11:56am

This morning, the Cato Institute announced the winner of its [2010 Milton Friedman Prize for Advancing Liberty: Akbar Ganji](#), an Iranian writer and journalist. Ganji, author of *The Road to Democracy in Iran*, *Republican Manifesto*, and *The Dungeons of Ghosts*, spent 6 years in Tehran's notorious Evin prison for advocating a secular democracy and exposing the government's involvement in the assassinations of individuals opposed to the Iranian regime. Since his release, he has been a tireless advocate for the Iranian people, raising awareness of the [many human rights violations](#) taking place in the country.

Last year's elections raised worldwide awareness of Iran's [state-sanctioned rights abuses](#); my colleague Julie has written extensively about last year's [elections](#) in Iran and the [role](#) that [women played](#) in the resistance movement. I am glad that Cato has used this award to shed further light on the country; global attention, and harsh public opinion, will hopefully exert further pressure on Iran's leaders to reform.

We congratulate Mr. Gandji on his award, and thank him for his noble efforts and hard work.

As a side note: interestingly, Gandji remains opposed to military action to effect change in the region because "you cannot bring democracy to a country by attacking it." This dovetails well with Cato's [work](#) on the [subject](#).

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