

## Iranian writer Akbar Ganji wins Milton Friedman Prize

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**Iranian writer and journalist Akbar Ganji won the Milton Friedman Prize for Advancing Liberty, a \$500,000 award given by the Washington DC-based Cato Institute once every two years.**

Ganji, who spent six years in jail after he tied the killing of dissidents in the late 1990s to senior clerics and officials in the government, will be given his award on May 13, Cato said on its website.

"Akbar Ganji endured immense suffering fighting for the cause of liberty in Iran," said Edward H. Crane, president of the Cato Institute, on the site. "Considering what he went through, no one would have blamed him for giving up, but he continued to think and write about ways to make Iran a better place for his people, risking his personal freedom and safety with every word."

Ganji went on a hunger strike in prison that sparked calls from then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and Amnesty International for his release. He was freed in 2006.

Ganji now lives in New York, according to Cato. His first book in English, *The Road to Democracy in Iran*, was published in 2008.

The previous winners of the prize that was established in 2002 include Yon Goicoechea, the leader of a student movement in Venezuela, and former Estonian Prime Minister Mart Laar.

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