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## Interview with 2021 Right Livelihood Laureate Vladimir Slivyak



The Press Office of the Global Campus of Human Rights had the opportunity to ask Right Livelihood Laureate 2021 Vladimir Slivyak about his work as co-founder of Ecodefense and the meaning of his 2021 award.

**Please share with us about your background and role as co-chairman and co-founder of Ecodefense, one of Russia's leading environmental organisation.**

*I was born 1973 in Soviet Union. In 1989 I co-founded one of the oldest environmental groups in Russia - Ecodefense. I was a student studying industrial construction at that time, and we founded environmental group with my friends students. For over 30 years I was mostly working as a campaigner on energy issues. Ecodefense is strongly opposing nuclear power as dangerous, uneconomic and counterproductive for measures to stop climate change. It is also opposes the extraction and use of fossil fuel damaging the Earth' climate. Most of my time I've spent on campaigns to stop various nuclear and fossil fuel projects in Russia.*

**How was being recognised as Right Livelihood Award 2021 and how did it help with your activities with Ecodefense?**

*It helped very much to draw attention to Russian civil society and its confrontation with Russian dictatorship of Vladimir Putin. It also helped to draw attention to activism as an instrument of change. Authoritarian and dictatorship states are always trying repress activists because they want to stop a progress, they want to live in the past. Unfortunately, when society supports authoritarian way of life, it puts on activists enormous pressure. Activists need protection because they are extremely important for a future' progress of society.*

**What is your opinion on the importance of human rights education in the field of environmental protection?**

*I think human rights are the most important, also for environmental protection. And environmental rights of people are part of human rights agenda. It is very simple, to effectively protect the environment you need an effort by activists, civil society. But activists can exist only in democratic society. Authoritarian and dictatorship states wants to use the nature (or natural environment if you like) as a resource and that kills the nature. When environmental activists protesting, dictators are just putting them to jail. In order to protect environment, which is essential for human survival, you need democracy and the respect of human rights. So both things - human rights and environmental protection - are very well interconnected.*

**Could you give a message to the students, professors, partners and staff of the Global Campus of Human Rights?**

*Dear GCHR, you do extremely important work for today's society internationally. You are creating the foundation for world's democracy. You are creating a foundation for human survival. That's equal. No job is more important than yours. Please, continue and do it the best way you can. I count on you, the whole*

*world is counting on you.*

For more information contact our [Press Office](#)

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