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AUP Alumna Awarded 2020 Simone de Beauvoir Prize for Women’s Freedom

Sonia Terrab awarded prize, along with Leila Slimani and Karima Nadir, representing the Collectif 490 des hors-la-loi – a group of women and men claiming sexual freedom in Morocco.

PARIS, France – January 9, 2020 – The American University of Paris (AUP) is pleased to announce that Sonia Terrab, a graduate of AUP’s MA in Global Communications, has been awarded, along with author Leila Slimani and poet Karima Nadir, the 2020 Simone de Beauvoir Prize for Women’s Freedom for her work as part of the Collectif 490 des hors-la-loi, or Outlaws Collective 490, a group of women and men claiming sexual freedom in Morocco.

A collective of 490 women and men initially signed a manifesto denouncing Article 490 of the Moroccan criminal code, which punishes “by imprisonment of one month to one year all persons of both sexes having extra-marital sexual relations.” The manifesto was drafted in parallel to mobilizing support for journalist Hajar Raissouni, who was arrested on August 31, 2019, for “illegal abortion” and “extra-marital sexual relations,” before being freed that October. The outlaws aim, by publicly proclaiming a sexual freedom denied Moroccan citizens by law, to secure women’s emancipation in the country by campaigning for the universal rights of Moroccan citizens. The manifesto has now received over 15,000 signatures.

Sonia Terrab said: “In Morocco you can go to jail because you are in love. You can go to jail because you have had an abortion. After the journalist Hajar Raissouni was arrested, it was revolting for us as women to think that something like this could happen. We felt the need to denounce the arrest and state our anger. We wanted to talk about this and raise a national debate. A lot of women are speaking up and saying this is a problem. We have so many testimonies from young people who have suffered because of these laws. Now, we have presented our petition to parliament, and we are trying to use the tools we have as citizens to change this law.”

Sonia Terrab is a Moroccan film director, novelist and journalist, and a member of AUP’s graduating class of 2011. She has published two novels, Shamablanca in 2011 and The Revolution Did Not Happen in 2015. Her 2016 documentary film, Shakespeare in Casablanca, profiles a Casablanca-based theater troupe preparing a performance of A Midsummer Night’s Dream while discussing definitions of love with the city’s residents. Her web series, Marokkiates, gives Moroccan women a platform to discuss their uncensored views of their daily experiences.

The American University of Paris believes that a liberal arts education provides a launchpad for the pursuit of international careers that promote tolerance, acceptance and open-mindedness. The University celebrates projects that emphasize diverse opinions and cross-cultural collaboration. Its MA in Global Communications produces expert communications professionals and scholars who value varied perspectives and diverse communities.

The Simone de Beauvoir Prize was created 12 years ago by Julia Kristeva, a Bulgarian–French philosopher and novelist, to mark the 100th anniversary of Simone de Beauvoir’s birth. It has since been awarded to personalities and institutions who defend women’s freedom, including Barbara Nowacka, a leader in the Polish right-to-abortion movement; Giusi Nicolini, former mayor of Lampedusa, Italy, for her protection of migrants in the Mediterranean; and Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani activist for female education and youngest ever Nobel laureate. This year’s award ceremony took place on January 9, 2020, at the Maison de l’Amérique Latine in Paris.
About The American University of Paris

Founded in Paris as an American-style liberal arts college in 1962, The American University of Paris is an international university located at the meeting point of France, Europe and the world. The University has at the core of its mission the commitment to providing a student-centered, transformative and career-enabling education. Students from over a hundred nationalities benefit from small class sizes, which combine liberal arts inquiry with an active approach to learning. World-class faculty members teach in English across 27 undergraduate majors and 4 core fields of graduate study. AUP’s 20,000 alumni live and work in 145 countries across the globe. For more information visit [www.aup.edu](http://www.aup.edu).

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