

## Indian environmental law organisation wins Right Livelihood Award

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LIFE was founded by lawyers Ritwick Dutta and Rahul Choudhary in 2005. Since then, LIFE has fought against some of India's most significant environmental threats (Courtesy-elaw.org)

Delhi-based environmental organisation Legal Initiative for Forest and Environment (LIFE) has received the 2021 Right Livelihood Award for its "grassroots approach of empowering vulnerable communities to protect their livelihoods and claim their right to a clean environment." The award is known as Sweden's alternative Nobel Prize.

Other awardees include Cameroonian women's and girls' rights activist Marthe Wandou, the first person from Cameroon to receive the Award, Russian environmental activist Vladimir Slivyak, and Canadian Indigenous rights defender Freda Huson.

The Right Livelihood Award honours and supports people solving global problems. It comes with a cash prize of 1 million Swedish crowns (115,000 USD) and long-term support to highlight and expand Laureates' work.

"Despite a robust environmental protection law framework, access to justice for those intending to protect India's remaining forests and biodiversity is often limited. To fill this gap, LIFE was founded by lawyers Ritwick Dutta and Rahul Choudhary in 2005. Since then, LIFE has fought against some of India's most significant environmental threats, including helping local communities stop the construction of a large-scale bauxite mine in the eastern state of Odisha and halt a hydro-power project in the state of Arunachal Pradesh," said a statement from Stockholm based Right Livelihood on Wednesday.

Right Livelihood's jury said that LIFE was receiving the award "for innovative legal work empowering communities to protect their resources in the pursuit of environmental democracy in India."

Dutta said they are extremely thrilled to receive the Right Livelihood Award. "This is our first international prize, and it means a lot to us and to all the local groups across India that we are supporting. The Award will help us increase the impact of our work, empowering more people to protect nature and livelihoods."

Ole von Uexkull, the executive director of Right Livelihood, said: "Legal Initiative for Forest and Environment works for justice and the protection of nature in the name of communities all over India." Von Uexkull added from dams to mines, LIFE's lawyers have fought both governmental and

corporate interests that threaten peoples' survival and rights. "They empower citizens' groups to claim their right to a clean environment, on which their livelihoods depend."

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/indian-environmental-law-org-wins-right-livelihood-award-101632899120394.html>