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Murdered activists cross the ocean for the first time

Protection International, Thai-Based Photographer, Canadian Composer and NYC String Quartet collaborate *For Those Who Died Trying*

Toronto, ON : Today, Protection International, an international human rights NGO, announces the world-renowned Mivos Quartet's world premiere concert in Toronto of the piece, *The Thailand HRDs*, by Toronto composer Frank Horvat, inspired by the photo essay *For Those Who Died Trying*, by photographer Luke Duggleby.

'*For Those Who Died Trying*' presents photographs of 37 murdered or abducted human rights defenders in Thailand by placing a portrait of the victim (following a Buddhist tradition), when possible at the exact place where they were murdered or went missing. "*We wanted this photo exhibition to expose the situation of human rights defenders in Thailand and support their legitimate quest for justice,*" said Liliana De Marco Coenen, Executive Director of Protection International.

'*The Thailand HRDs*' presents each photo in a 2-minute classical string-quartet composition utilizing just the musical pitches/letters found in the names of each victim – implanting their unique musical DNA in every piece. "*This music is not intended to be purely melancholic but have a tinge of defiance so the memory of these heroes lives on and will hopefully spur listeners to find their inner activist and fight for what they feel is important in this world,*" explains Frank Horvat, the composer.

This unique event taking place at the Gathering Hall in Toronto's Mount Pleasant Cemetery on Monday August 6, will be part concert, part photo exhibit, part memorial to these victims of violence.

In the last 20 years, more than 59 Thai environmental activists and Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) have been murdered or have been abducted. Across the country, villagers who have simply been trying to protect their homes and their communities have been abducted or shot dead. Very few charges have ever been laid against the perpetrators of any of these crimes.

"*It is vital, for the victims and the families, that their fight and their death should not be forgotten and left unrecognized,*" commented Luke Duggleby, the photographer.

These two art projects by Protection International look to remember those who died defending human rights and protecting the environment, and to help make it harder for the perpetrators to remain under the radar and continue this cycle of violence. Enforced disappearance is still a reality in modern Thai society. Recognizing those who died trying as HRDs and a better administration of justice are critical steps to end these killings.

"*As performers of contemporary works, it is important to us to utilize the power of music to shed light on meaningful issues affecting the world today.*" - MIVOS Quartet



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“Collaborating with artists like Luke and Frank has been inspiring and moving for us and we believe the public will greatly enjoy the performance by the MIVOS Quartet. We hope to see more artists following their path and join human rights defenders in their struggles,” concluded Liliana De Marco.

This event would not be possible without the support of the Mount Pleasant Funeral Centre, the Ontario Arts Council and the Ontario Arts Foundation.

EVENT DETAILS:

For Those Who Died Trying

World Premiere Concert & Photo Exhibit
Monday, August 6 at 5pm

Gathering Hall
Mount Pleasant Cemetery
375 Mount Pleasant Rd.
FREE Admission

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- New York Times Article: <http://bit.ly/thai-hrds>
“The silent portraits, looking small and vulnerable in their settings...looking back at the viewer from the scene of their last terrifying moments.” – The New York Times
- Short Video Documentary (interviews with victims’ families & survivors): <http://bit.ly/thai-doc>
- Photo Essay by Luke Duggleby/Protection International: <http://bit.ly/thai-photos>

About PROTECTION INTERNATIONAL: International non-profit organization that provides protection strategies and tools for security management to human rights defenders who are at risk. www.protectioninternational.org

About FRANK HORVAT: One of the most inventive songwriters to come out of the contemporary scene in Canada (WholeNote Magazine), this award winning Toronto-based composer’s music explores a wide array of themes from love to social justice issues. www.frankhorvat.com

About LUKE DUGGLEBY: Award-winning British freelance photographer who has been based in Asia for 15 years shooting documentary, portraiture and editorial assignments for media and clients including National Geographic, Al Jazeera, TIME, and the New York Times. www.lukeduggleby.com

About MIVOS QUARTET: This New York Quartet has earned a reputation as one of America’s most daring and ferocious new-music ensembles (The Chicago Reader) and is active in performing works by contemporary composers and presenting new music to diverse audiences all across the world. While in Toronto they will be recording *The Thailand HRDs* for release in December 2018 on United Nations’ International Human Rights Day. www.mivosquartet.com

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