

Press Release, 13 October 2026, Prague

30th Forum 2000 Conference Commemorated Václav Havel's Legacy and Welcomed More Than 800 Democracy Advocates from Around the World

The 30th edition of the international Forum 2000 Conference, entitled ***Reimagining the Power of the Powerless***, concluded today after taking place from 11 to 13 October at the Prague Congress Centre. One of the world's leading events of its kind was held in a year marking the 30th anniversary of the Forum 2000 Foundation and the 90th anniversary of the birth of its founder, President **Václav Havel**. The conference welcomed more than 800 prominent politicians, diplomats, activists, dissidents, experts, journalists, and representatives of civil society.

This year's guests included historian and Distinguished Research Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Existential Risk at the University of Cambridge **Yuval Noah Harari**; President of the Dominican Republic **Luis Abinader**; First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kosovo **Glauk Konjufca**; former President of Botswana **Ian Khama**; Stanford University professor and leading political scientist **Larry Diamond**; prominent Mozambican politician and Member of Parliament **Ivone Soares**; former President of Lithuania **Dalia Grybauskaitė**; His Beatitude **Epiphanius**, Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Ukraine; former President of Poland and Nobel Peace Prize laureate **Lech Wałęsa**; Minister of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar's National Unity Government **Zin Mar Aung**; and Czech Minister of Health **Adam Vojtěch**.

On Sunday evening, the conference opened with the presentation of the sixth [Forum 2000 International Award for Courage and Responsibility](#). This year, the award was presented to the **General Strike Coordination Body (GSCB)**, a prominent coalition of strike committees and civil society organizations in Myanmar that brings together dozens of groups, including students, trade unionists, representatives of the Civil Disobedience Movement, and ethnic strike committees. Three pro-democracy activists, **Tayzar San**, **Nan Lin**, and **Htet Myat Aung**, were also honored. Htet Myat Aung was arrested in December 2025, tortured, and subsequently sentenced to 37 years in prison. *"If Havel had listened to those who said that change is impossible, we would be living in a different Europe today. One day we will be free, we will live in peace, and people in Myanmar will celebrate their victory. When that day comes, I hope we will meet again here, not to celebrate how to fight dictatorships, but to celebrate how we defeated them,"* said **Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya**, a leading representative of the Belarusian democratic opposition, in her address. The opening ceremony also featured a musical performance by renowned Romani musician **Mário Bihári** and an address by **Miloš Vystrčil**, President of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic. Reflecting on Václav Havel's legacy, Vystrčil emphasized: *"He reminds us that an authoritarian system rests not only on the power of the authoritarian leader but also on fear, indifference and resignation of people that do not believe that an individual can make a difference."*

More information about the presentation of the sixth Forum 2000 International Award for Courage and Responsibility is available [here](#).

On Monday morning, **Jakub Klepal**, Executive Director of the Forum 2000 Foundation, opened the introductory panel discussion by noting: *“As in Myanmar, things have not turned out to be better in Iran, Belarus or North Korea. This is one of the reasons why Forum 2000 is still needed, to change opinions, to develop policy proposals and enhance freedom.”*

He was followed by **Kim Aris**, the son of Nobel Peace Prize laureate and member of the Forum 2000 Foundation’s International Advisory Board **Aung San Suu Kyi**, who has been imprisoned since the military coup in February 2021. *“For more than five and a half years my mom’s location has been hidden. Yet, standing here in Prague today I recall what she addressed on this forum before. She shared how Vaclav made her feel free and he never stopped striving for democracy; that was a symbolic moment of global solidarity.”*

Conference participants also received video messages from former U.S. President **George W. Bush** and Czech President **Petr Pavel**. President Pavel highlighted one of the conference’s key themes: *“Technology should strengthen human freedom and resilience, not diminish our autonomy or place decisions about our future beyond meaningful public control.”* In connection with the courage of the honored activists from Myanmar, the following was also emphasized: *“Their courage exposes the weakness of those who need prisons to silence the truth.”*

The subsequent discussion, *Václav Havel’s Courage of the Powerless*, focusing on Václav Havel’s legacy, also featured **Tawakkol Karman**, Nobel Peace Prize laureate, who said: *“How the EU can help the Yemenis is by helping them rebuild the country. The government should restore the rule of law throughout Yemeni society. We had a great National Dialogue Conference, and it is very important to return to its outcomes and help people believe in reestablishing democracy.”*

Dozens of further discussions took place on Monday and Tuesday, many of them drawing on Václav Havel’s legacy and his emphasis on civic responsibility, human dignity, and the ability of individuals to stand up to oppression. The concluding panel discussion, *The Next 30*, also featured **Luis Abinader**, President of the Dominican Republic, and **Benedetta Berti**, Secretary General of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

The conference also provided an opportunity for working meetings within the Forum 2000 Foundation’s long-standing initiatives, including [Democratic Solidarity Latin America \(DSLA\)](#), [Democratic Solidarity Africa \(DSA\)](#), and the [International Coalition for Democratic Renewal \(ICDR\)](#). The ICDR brings together approximately 500 intellectuals, politicians, and civil society activists from around the world.

Recordings of selected panel discussions will be available to the public on the [official Forum 2000 Foundation website](#), where “5 Big Ideas” summarizing the main themes of this year’s conference will also be published.

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