

President Mahamadou Issoufou wins 2020 Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership



The President of Niger demonstrated exceptional leadership and respect for democracy amidst an unprecedented combination of challenges

London and Dakar, 8 March 2021 – The 2020 Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership has been awarded to Mahamadou Issoufou, President of Niger, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation announced today following a meeting of its independent Prize Committee.

President Mahamadou Issoufou served two five-year terms as President of Niger from 2011 to 2020. He is the sixth recipient of the Ibrahim Prize, which recognises and celebrates excellence in African leadership. The Ibrahim Prize aims to distinguish exceptional leaders who, during their time in office, have developed their countries, strengthened democracy and protected rule of law for the shared benefit of their people.

In its citation, the Prize Committee praised President Issoufou's exceptional leadership after inheriting one of the world's poorest economies, facing seemingly insurmountable challenges. Throughout his time in office, he has fostered economic growth, shown unwavering commitment to regional stability and to the constitution, and championed African democracy.

Announcing the decision, Festus Mogae, Chair of the Prize Committee and former President of Botswana said: "In the face of the most severe political and economic issues, including violent extremism and increasing desertification, President Mahamadou Issoufou has led his people on a path of progress. Today, the number of Nigeriens living below the poverty line has fallen to 40%, from 48% a decade ago. While challenges remain, Issoufou has kept his promises to the Nigerien people and paved the way for a better future. After careful consideration, the Committee finds President Issoufou a worthy winner of the Ibrahim Prize."

President Issoufou was first democratically elected President in 2011, following many years of military rule in Niger. He was elected for a second term in 2016 and stepped down at the end of this mandate, demonstrating his clear respect for the constitution.

Data from the 2020 *Ibrahim Index of African Governance* (IIAG) underline President Issoufou's achievements. During his ten years as President, Niger has made progress in multiple areas, including improving in all four sub-categories of *Human Development*. At the end of the decade, Niger ranked 28 out of 54 countries in the IIAG. It is among the ten most improved African countries in strengthening socioeconomic opportunities for women.

On learning the outcome of the Prize Committee's deliberations, Mo Ibrahim said: "I'm delighted that the Prize Committee has made President Mahamadou Issoufou an Ibrahim Prize Laureate. He is an outstanding leader who has worked tirelessly for the people of Niger, meeting some of the region's toughest challenges with determination and respect. I am proud to see Issoufou recognised as an example of exceptional leadership and I hope his legacy will inspire generations of African leaders."

President Mahamadou Issoufou joins President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia (2017), President Hifikepunye Pohamba of Namibia (2014), President Pedro Pires of Cabo Verde (2011), President Festus Mogae of Botswana (2008) and President Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique (2007) as an Ibrahim Prize Laureate. President Nelson Mandela was made the inaugural Honorary Laureate in 2007.

The Ibrahim Prize is a US\$5 million award paid over ten years. It ensures that the African continent continues to benefit from the experience and wisdom of exceptional leaders once they have left national office, by enabling them to continue their invaluable work in other civic roles on the continent.

The candidates for the Ibrahim Prize are all former African Executive Heads of State or Government who have left office during the last three calendar years, having been democratically elected and served their constitutionally mandated term.

The full citation from the Prize Committee can be read at <http://mif.media/2020-citation-en>.

Notes to Editors:

Contact MIF:

For more information, or to request an interview with a MIF spokesperson please contact:

- MIF Media Team: mifmedia@portland-communications.com, +44 7922 877 489

The Ibrahim Prize:

- Recognises and celebrates African leaders who, under challenging circumstances, have developed their countries, lifted people out of poverty and paved the way for sustainable and equitable prosperity;
- Highlights exceptional role models for the continent;
- Ensures that the African continent continues to benefit from the experience and wisdom of exceptional leaders once they have left national office, by enabling them to continue in other civic roles on the continent;
- Is an award and a standard for excellence in leadership in Africa, and not a 'first prize' - there is not necessarily a Laureate every year.

Criteria:

- Former African Executive Head of State or Government
- Left office in the last three years
- Democratically elected
- Served his/her constitutionally mandated term
- Demonstrated exceptional leadership

The Ibrahim Prize is the largest annually awarded prize in the world, consisting of:

- US\$5 million over ten years

Prize Committee:

The winner of the Ibrahim Prize is selected by an independent Prize Committee, appointed by the Foundation Board, comprised of:

- President Festus Mogae (Chair) | Former President of Botswana; 2008 Ibrahim Prize Laureate
- Aïcha Bah Diallo | President, Network for Education for All in Africa; Former Minister of Education in Guinea; Former Assistant Director General for Education (ADG/ED), UNESCO; Founder and Chair, Business for the Empowerment of Women
- Mohamed ElBaradei | Director General Emeritus, International Atomic Energy Agency; Nobel Peace Prize Laureate
- President Horst Köhler | Federal President of Germany 2004-2010
- Graça Machel | President, Foundation for Community Development; Former Minister of Education in Mozambique; Mo Ibrahim Foundation Board Member
- Mary Robinson | Chair of The Elders and Adjunct Professor for Climate Justice in Trinity College Dublin; Former UN Special Envoy on the Great Lakes Region of Africa; Former UN Envoy on Climate Change; Former President of Ireland; Mo Ibrahim Foundation Board Member



You can follow the Mo Ibrahim Foundation on:

- Website: mo.ibrahim.foundation
- Twitter: [@Mo_IbrahimFdn](https://twitter.com/Mo_IbrahimFdn)
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MoIbrahimFoundation>
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/moibrahimfoundation>
- Instagram: <https://instagram.com/moibrahimfoundation>
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/moibrahimfoundation>

About the Mo Ibrahim Foundation:

The Mo Ibrahim Foundation was established in 2006 with a focus on the critical importance of political leadership and public governance in Africa. By providing tools to support progress in leadership and governance, the Foundation aims to promote meaningful change on the continent.

The Foundation, which is a non-grant making organisation, focusses on defining, assessing and enhancing governance and leadership in Africa through five main initiatives:

- Ibrahim Index of African Governance
- Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership
- Ibrahim Governance Weekend
- Ibrahim Fellowships and Scholarships
- Now Generation Network