



**Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Elie Wiesel and Sir Salman Rushdie to discuss  
freedom of expression to a sold out audience at Spirit of Hope Benefit**

**May 6, 2010, TORONTO** – On Monday, May 31, 2010 Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center, a not-for-profit dedicated to fostering tolerance through education and social action, will host award-winning authors and two of the most inspirational humanitarian provocateurs of our time, Elie Wiesel and Sir Salman Rushdie, at the Spirit of Hope Benefit, a fundraiser and celebration of the ideals of democracy, justice and human rights.

Moderated by The Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, the award-winning authors will address a sold out crowd of more than 2,300 at the Beth Tzedec Synagogue in Toronto. In keeping with its mission to educate, the Center's membership and donors will be sponsoring more than 500 students, teachers, police officers and community leaders to attend the event.

“To witness Elie Wiesel and Sir Salman Rushdie in an open forum together is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,” said Avi Benlolo, President and CEO of the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center. “We are honoured that they have accepted our invitation to participate in the Spirit of Hope Benefit and by doing so, contribute to the mission of our organization.”

Elie Wiesel is a survivor of the World War II Nazi Concentration Camps who became a journalist and scholar after the war. Presently a professor of humanities at Boston University, Wiesel has authored a wide collection of books, most notably the book *Night*, an account of his experience in Auschwitz and Buchenwald concentration camps.

Sir Salman Rushdie is a British-Indian novelist and essayist who is most widely known for his book *The Satanic Verses*. As an outspoken critic of religious extremism, Rushdie was appointed *Knight Bachelor* by Queen Elizabeth II and holds the rank *Commandeur* in the Order of Arts and Letters of France.

The Spirit of Hope Benefit raises funds to support and strengthen the important work of Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center in promoting a more tolerant and accepting society – at home and abroad. To learn more about the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center's Spirit of Hope Benefit, visit: <http://www.fswc.ca>.

**About Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies**

Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies is a Canadian human rights organization dedicated to fostering tolerance and understanding through community involvement, educational outreach and social action. The Center currently has over 25,000 members across Canada, and confronts important contemporary issues including racism, antisemitism, terrorism and genocide. Visit [www.fswc.ca](http://www.fswc.ca) for more information.

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**For coverage opportunities and stories related to the Spirit of Hope Benefit please contact:**

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