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Heroes of our time

Who are the men and women changing the world for the better? The NS invites you to nominate your hero. In week two, four more familiar names offer their thoughts - but ultimately it's up to you. So go online at <http://www.newstatesman.com/heroes> or use the form attached and give a brief explanation if you wish. We shall publish some citations with our final list of 50 in May.

Our definition: a man or woman whose actions have been in the service of the greater good and whose influence is national or international: someone who is prepared to act in pursuit of a freer, more equitable and more democratic future without resorting to violence.

John Pilger nominates **Rami Elhanan, peace campaigner**

Rami Elhanan is an Israeli graphic designer living in Jerusalem. On 4 September 1997 his daughter Smadar, aged 14, was killed by a Palestinian suicide bomber. "There is no moral difference," he told me, "between the Israeli soldier at a checkpoint who prevents a Palestinian woman who is having a baby from going through, causing her to lose her baby, and the man who killed my daughter. Just as my daughter was a victim of the Israeli occupation, so was the bomber." Rami and his wife, Nurit, are members of Bereaved Families for Peace, which brings together Israelis and Palestinians who have lost loved ones - and includes relatives of suicide bombers. Rami is often abused in Israel for truth-telling. He is a hero.

Eric Hobsbawm nominates **Amartya Sen, Nobel laureate**

The human effects of globalisation were until recently measured by indices of (per capita) GDP. My heroes devised a Human Development Index for the UN which takes account of other factors - education, health, life expectancy, the condition of women, access to services, etc. Within a few years the HDI has become the universal companion to, and criticism of, economic growth series.

But for his early death in 1998 my nomination would have been for the Pakistani economist Mahbub ul-Haq, chief inventor of the HDI; fortunately his co-pioneer, the Nobel laureate Amartya Kumar Sen, is alive. For reminding governments that economic growth is not enough, I nominate him and the HDI.

Patricia Hewitt nominates **Aung San Suu Kyi, peace campaigner**

Aung San Suu Kyi is a shining example of personal courage in the pursuit of a noble ideal. Progress is entirely dependent on such heroism.

Often it is displayed by nameless men and women: the thousands who marched for the Great Charter, the women who went to prison for the vote, or the millions who brought down apartheid. But at the head of these popular movements are the individuals who motivate, inspire, teach and lead.

Aung San Suu Kyi, with her insistence on non-violence and on dialogue with even the most bitter of foes, with her determination and her unshakeable faith in democracy, stands on the shoulders of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King. She is an authentic living heroine.

**Lindsey Hilsum nominates
Mary Kayitesi Blewitt, director of the Survivors Fund**

My nominee is **Mary Kayitesi Blewitt**, the director of Surf, the Survivors Fund. Since 1994 she has devoted her life to the survivors of the genocide in Rwanda, especially women who were raped and now suffer from Aids. She is tough and compassionate, and she never gives up. Rwandan herself, she never ceases to help other Rwandans in Britain as well as those back home. She works constantly to keep the genocide in the public eye, never allowing us to forget. That is probably as important as the practical help she brings to the women of Rwanda.