

5 YEARS of support of the Helsingin Sanomat Foundation



Turkish journalist Ahmet Şik was awarded the 2014 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize. Photo credit: © UNESCO / Nora Houguenade

Over the course of the last five years, the Helsingin Sanomat Foundation (HSF) has been the main sponsor of the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize. This prestigious award, whose twentieth anniversary was celebrated this year, has been awarded to courageous journalists who have stood up for press freedom and freedom of expression, despite the risks they faced. It is considered as one of the leading recognitions worldwide in the field of press freedom and is the only one in existence within the United Nations system. Given the international visibility of the award, it highlights the commitment and resolution of individuals towards freedom of expression and the challenges they face.

With the support of HSF, the Prize has facilitated the release of several laureates and has allowed their work to continue. From 2013 to 2017, four out of five laureates were imprisoned at the time of their respective award ceremony. Three of them were later released, a testament to the impact of the Prize and its potential in contributing to a free and independent media all over the globe.

In 2013, the independent international jury recommended Ethiopian journalist Reeyot Alemu as the winner. At the time, she was serving a five-year prison

sentence for her reporting. Alemu was released in 2015, serving only three years of her sentence. Investigative reporter Ahmet Şik from Turkey received the Prize in 2014 and was one of the few laureates not imprisoned at the time the award was conferred. The 2015 Prize was awarded to Syrian press freedom advocate Mazen Darwish, who had endured torture, travel bans, numerous detentions and harassment for his work. He had been arrested in 2012 and was released from jail in August 2015, three months after receiving the Prize. The following year, Azerbaijani investigative journalist Khadija Ismayilova was chosen by the 2016 jury. On 25 May 2016, only three weeks after receiving the prestigious Prize, she was released from prison. The latest laureate is Dawit Isaak, an Eritrean-Swedish journalist who has been imprisoned for more than 15 years since 2001. His current whereabouts are unknown.

The partnership with HSF can be considered a success, not only in terms of its efficacy, but also in terms of its impact. In the last five years, the Prize has been able to change lives for the better and has become more prominent as the leading recognition for press freedom advocacy. The support of HSF has been indispensable in this process.



HELSINGIN SANOMAT FOUNDATION

BACKGROUND of the prize

Created in 1997, the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize honours a person, organisation or institution that has made an outstanding contribution to the defence and/or promotion of press freedom anywhere in the world, and especially when this has been achieved in the face of danger. It was established on the initiative of UNESCO's Executive Board and is formally conferred by the UNESCO Director-General, on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, on 3 May.

Awarded annually, the \$25,000 Prize is named in honour of Guillermo Cano Isaza, a Colombian journalist who was assassinated in front of the offices of his newspaper *El Espectador* in Bogotá, Colombia on 17 December 1986. It is jointly funded by the Helsingin Sanomat Foundation (HSF) and the Guillermo Cano Isaza Foundation (Colombia).

LAUREATES

Laureates of the Prize have made significant contributions to media freedom worldwide, often in the face of danger and in times of crisis. They are selected by an international and independent jury, consisting of six members who represent all types of media. Jury members are well-known for their work in the area of news gathering, journalism, press freedom, and freedom of expression.

The Prize has been awarded to journalists and activists, in some cases posthumously.

1997 – Gao Yu, China
1998 – Christina Anyanwu, Nigeria
1999 – Jesus Blancornelas, Mexico
2000 – Nizar Nayyoub, Syria
2001 – U Win Tin, Myanmar
2002 – Geoffrey Nyarota, Zimbabwe
2003 – Amira Hass, Israel
2004 – Raúl Rivero, Cuba
2005 – Cheng Yizhong, China
2006 – May Chidiac, Lebanon
2007 – Anna Politkovskaya, Russia

2008 – Lydia Cacho Ribeiro, Mexico
2009 – Lasantha Wickrematunge, Sri Lanka
2010 – Mónica González Mujica, Chile
2011 – Ahmad Zeidabadi, Iran
2012 – Eynulla Fatullayev, Azerbaijan
2013 – Reeyot Alemu, Ethiopia
2014 – Ahmet Sik, Turkey
2015 – Mazen Darwish, Syria
2016 – Khadija Ismayilova, Azerbaijan
2017 – Dawit Isaak, Eritrea/Sweden

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY



Plenary session two speakers during World Press Freedom Day 2017 International Conference in Jakarta, Indonesia. Photo credit: © UNESCO / Saorla McCabe

Every year, 3 May is a date which celebrates the fundamental principles of press freedom: to evaluate press freedom around the world, to defend the media from attacks on their independence and to pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the exercise of their profession.

World Press Freedom Day (WPFDD) is one of the main awareness-raising events on freedom of expression, and in particular press freedom and safety of journalists. Since 1993, UNESCO leads the global celebration with a main event in a different country every year, together with the host government and various partners working in the field of freedom of expression.

The main celebration of WPFDD organized by UNESCO offers a rare opportunity for media, human rights defenders, law and policy makers, civil society, UN agencies, and academics to network and explore new ideas and issues. It serves as the platform for the latest developments in the international standards on freedom of expression and press freedom. There are also opportunities for participating in various workshops for capacity building.

In 2017, the main conference of WPFDD was held in Jakarta, Indonesia under the global theme of *Critical Minds for Critical Times: Media's role in advancing peaceful, just and inclusive societies*. Organized by UNESCO, the Government of Indonesia and the Indonesian Press Council, it gathered a

record 1,500 participants from over 90 nationalities who examined the challenges facing media around the world such as fake news, safety of journalists, gender equality and countering violent extremism.

Globally, there are on average 100 WPFDD celebrations of varying sizes taking place each year on or around 3 May.

Significance

The annual date was proclaimed World Press Freedom Day by the UN General Assembly in 1993 following a Recommendation adopted at the twenty-sixth session of UNESCO's General Conference in 1991. This in turn responded to a call by African journalists who in 1991 produced the Windhoek Declaration which called for press freedom to encompass also media pluralism and independence.

The general value of the Day on the international calendar is that it serves to encourage citizens and authorities to cherish press freedom values, and to sensitize them about the adverse consequences of violations of the right to freedom of expression. It serves as a reminder to governments of the need to respect their commitment to press freedom and it is also a day of reflection among media professionals about issues



of press freedom and professional ethics. Just as importantly, World Press Freedom Day is a day of support for media which are targets for the restraint, or abolition, of press freedom. It is also a day of remembrance for those journalists who lost their lives in pursuit of a story. The Day has become a staple for press freedom organizations to convene with other stakeholders and explore further courses of action or partnerships.

Guy Berger
Director for Freedom of Expression
and Media Development

12 June 2017

Role of UNESCO

Within the UN family, UNESCO has a long-standing tradition of monitoring and raising awareness about the status of freedom of expression, freedom of information, and press freedom worldwide. UNESCO's Communication and Information Sector implements the Organization's 1945 constitutional mandate to promote the "free exchange of ideas and knowledge" and the "free flow of ideas by word and image." Its rights-based foundations provide context to UNESCO's approach to media development as being inseparable from the universal right to freedom of expression (and its corollaries of press freedom and the freedom of information).

They further underpin the UNESCO perspective that this bundle of rights applies to all media and across all frontiers. A flagship moment in this regard is the annual commemoration of World Press Freedom Day each 3 May through a global celebration and multiple local events, and the awarding of the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize. This is part of UNESCO's work as facilitator of networking and consensus-building between state and non-state actors, bringing them together to negotiate and create enabling conditions for freedom of expression, a free press, and access to information.

UNESCO has a proven track record in fostering dialogue on media and freedom of information legislative reform between policymakers, civil society organizations, media development groups, media, and other key actors worldwide as well as in supporting the development of the institutional and human capacities necessary for legislation's effective implementation. As part of the "One UN" philosophy, UNESCO also has a strong record of working in tandem with other UN agencies and mechanisms, such as the Special Rapporteur for freedom of opinion and expression and the Universal Periodical Review process.

UNESCO is the leading UN agency in the areas of safety of journalists and the issue of impunity. It has spearheaded the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity which was endorsed by the UN Chief Executives Board in April 2012. The UN Plan of Action is now a global reference point in the areas of safety of journalists and fight against impunity for crimes against journalists and is being referenced in UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions as well as EU Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline..

REGULATIONS FOR THE UNESCO/GUILLERMO CANO WORLD PRESS FREEDOM PRIZE

Article 1 – Purpose

UNESCO established the World Press Freedom Prize in honor of Guillermo Cano, a Colombian journalist who died in the exercise of his profession. The purpose of the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize is to reward each year a person, organization or institution that has made a notable contribution to the defense and/or promotion of press freedom anywhere in the world, especially if risks have been involved. The objective of the Prize is in conformity with UNESCO's policies and is related to the program of the Organization in the field of communication and information and, more specifically, to the priority given to promoting an enabling environment for freedom of expression and freedom of information.

Article 2 – Designation, amount and periodicity of the Prize

2.1 The Prize shall be entitled “UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize”.

2.2 The Prize shall be funded by voluntary contributions from States, international agencies and organizations, as well as other entities and shall consist of recurrent payments to be deposited in a special account opened for that purpose in accordance with the Financial Regulations of UNESCO. The value of the Prize shall be of a minimum of 25,000 USD and determined by the Director-General in consultation with the donors on the basis of the contributions received, the interest on the sum deposited in the special account in accordance with the Financial Regulations of UNESCO, and the charges to be borne by the account for the cost of administering the Prize.

2.3 The prize also consists of a certificate and an object symbolizing the award and granted to the prize winner.

2.4 All funds received and the interest accrued thereon shall be kept in a special interest-bearing account for the Prize.

2.5 The full staff support and operating/management costs of the Prize, including all costs relating to the award ceremony and public information activities shall be fully covered by the Cano Foundation and other donors. To this end, the Director-General shall determine a mandatory overhead cost amount to be applied and charged against the funds in the Special Account, which is to be established under the Financial Regulations for the Prize.

2.6 The Prize shall be awarded yearly.

Article 3 – Conditions/qualifications of candidates

Candidates shall have made a significant contribution to press freedom anywhere in the world representing all types of media including digital media. Prizes may be conferred upon individuals, institutions, other entities or non-governmental organizations.

Article 4 – Designation/selection of the prize winner(s)

The prize winner shall be selected by the Director-General of UNESCO on the basis of the assessments and recommendations made to him/her by a jury.

Article 5 – Jury

5.1 The Jury shall consist of one independent member, representing all types of media including digital media, from each of the six regions as defined by UNESCO, in other words six persons appointed in their individual capacity by the Director-General of UNESCO for a period of three years, renewable once.

5.2 Representatives and alternates of Members of the Executive Board may not be appointed as jurors. Jurors involved in a real or potential conflict of interest shall recuse themselves from further deliberations or be requested by the Director-General to do so. The Director-General may replace members of the Jury on legitimate grounds.

5.3 The Director-General shall appoint the President of the Jury. Members shall receive no remuneration for their work, but will receive allowances for travel and accommodation, where required. A quorum of four will be required for jury deliberations to proceed. The working languages for the Jury's deliberations shall be English and French.

5.4 An ad hoc working group of three Jury members, one of whom is the President, shall make a pre-selection to reduce the number of candidates to no more than twelve, if necessary. The working group should give priority to the candidates most frequently nominated. Any dispute over the pre-selection shall be settled by a simple majority vote of the members of the Jury, and the Jury may amend the final list of candidates accordingly.

5.5 The Jury shall conduct its business and deliberations in conformity with these Statutes and shall be assisted by a member of the UNESCO Secretariat designated by the Director-General. Decisions shall be

taken by consensus to the possible extent, and otherwise by secret ballot until a simple majority is obtained and with the President having a deciding-vote in the event of equal votes.

5.6 The Jury shall deliberate every year by electronic means.

5.7 The Jury shall recommend only one prize winner to the Director-General of UNESCO.

Article 6 – Nomination of candidates

6.1 When UNESCO has received the funding for the Prize, as indicated in Article 2 above, the Director-General of UNESCO shall officially invite the submission of nominations to the Secretariat of the Prize, by 15 February, from the governments of Member States, in consultation with their National Commissions, as well as from international and regional professional and non-governmental organizations active in the fields of journalism and freedom of expression. The Jury shall vote, by electronic means, around 15 March and shall notify the Director-General of its choice.

6.2 Nominations shall be submitted to the Director-General by the governments of Member States, in consultation with their National Commissions, and by international and regional professional and non-governmental organizations active in the field of journalism and freedom of expression. A self-nomination cannot be considered.

6.3 Each nomination shall be accompanied by a written recommendation, which shall include, in English or French, inter alia:

- (a) a description of the candidate's background and achievements;
- (b) the candidate's contributions of major importance to the promotion of freedom of the press, submitted to the Jury for consideration;
- (c) a definition of the candidate's contribution to the Prize's objectives.
- (d) a high-resolution photo portrait of the candidate

Article 7 – Procedure for the awarding of the Prize

7.1 The Prize shall be awarded by the Director-General at an official ceremony held for that purpose on 3 May, on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day. UNESCO shall present to the prize winner a check for the amount of the Prize, together with a diploma and an object symbolizing the award. UNESCO shall officially announce the name(s) of the prize winner.

7.2 The prize winner, shall, if possible, give a lecture on a subject relevant to the work for which the Prize has been awarded. Such a lecture shall be organized during or in connection with the prize ceremony.

7.3 Work produced by a person since deceased shall not be considered for the Prize. If, however, a prize winner dies before he or she has received the Prize, then the Prize may be presented posthumously.

7.4 Should a prize winner decline the Prize; the Jury shall submit a new proposal to the Director-General.

Article 8 – Sunset clause – mandatory renewal of the Prize

8.1 After a period of six years, the Director-General of UNESCO together with the donors will undertake a review of all aspects of the Prize and decide about its continuation or termination. The Director-General will inform the Executive Board of UNESCO about the results of this review.

8.2 In case of termination of the Prize, the use of any unspent balance of funds shall be determined by the Director-General, in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the Prize.

Article 9 – Appeals

No appeals shall be allowed against the decision of UNESCO with regard to the award of the Prize. Proposals received for the award of the Prize may not be divulged.

Article 10 – Amendments to the Statutes of the Prize

Any amendment to the present Statutes shall be submitted to the Executive Board for approval.

The rules are also available on the official website:
<https://en.unesco.org/prizes/guillermo-cano>