



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

UNESCO/ GUILLERMO CANO WORLD PRESS FREEDOM PRIZE 2019 DONORS' REPORT

The 2019 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize was awarded during the 26th celebration of World Press Freedom Day which was jointly organized by UNESCO, the African Union Commission and the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The celebration took place in Addis Ababa from 1 to 3 May at the African Union Headquarters. This year's theme "Media for Democracy: Journalism and Elections in Times of Disinformation" discussed current challenges faced by media in elections, along with the media's potential in supporting peace and reconciliation processes.

The UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize recognizes a person, organization or institution that has made an outstanding contribution to the defense or promotion of press freedom especially in the face of danger. It is named in honour of Guillermo Cano Isaza, the Colombian journalist who was assassinated in front of the offices of his newspaper *El Espectador* in Bogotá, Colombia, on 17 December 1986. 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.

The 2019 Prize was awarded to Mr Kyaw Soe Oo and Mr Wa Lone (Myanmar). They were arrested together on 12 December 2017, while working for the Reuters news agency, reporting on alleged human rights violations in Myanmar's state of Rakhine towards Rohingyas. They were sentenced in September 2018 to seven years of prison.

Award ceremony

The award ceremony took place on 2 May, within the framework of the global celebration of World Press Freedom Day in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Kyaw Soe Oo and Wa Lone could not attend the event as they were still in prison. Mr Thura Aung, Wa Lone's brother, received the award on their behalf. The event was attended by UNESCO's Director-General, Ms Audrey Azoulay, Mr Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, the jury members Hamid Mir (Pakistan), David Dembele (Mali) and Marilu Mastrogiovanni (Italy), and the Prize donors' representatives.



International Jury

The Jury of the Prize consists of six independent members, representing all types of media including digital media, one from each region of the world. This year, it was chaired by Wojciech Tochman (Poland), a Polish reporter and non-fiction writer.

Its other members were:

Hamid Mir (Pakistan), *Executive Editor Geo Television*

Marilu Mastrogiovanni (Italy), *Investigative journalist, Director, Il Tacco d'Italia*

Wendy Funes (Honduras), *Investigative journalist*

David Dembele (Mali), *Journalist, part of the Malian investigative journalist network*

Gisèle Khoury (Lebanon), *Journalist, BBC Arabic*

The USD 25,000 Prize was sponsored by three organizations:

Fundación Guillermo Cano Isaza, Helsingin Sanomat Foundation, Namibia Media Trust



A Prize with an impact

In the last seven years, the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize has been awarded to eight laureates, including the 2019 recipients, seven of which were imprisoned at the time of their awarding. Six of these were later released – a testament to the impact of the Prize and its potential to contribute to press freedom.

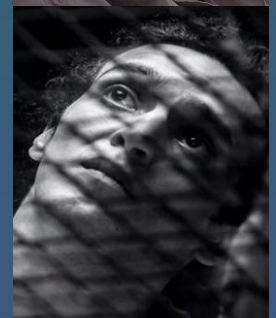
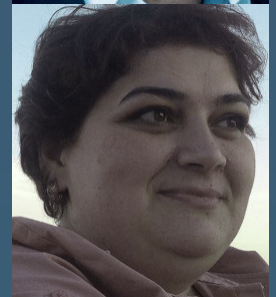
In 2013, Ethiopian journalist Reeyot Alemu was serving a five-year prison sentence for her reporting when she was awarded the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano Prize. She was released in 2015, serving only three years of her sentence.

In August 2015, Syrian press freedom advocate Mazen Darwish was released three months after receiving the Prize. He had endured torture, travel bans, numerous detentions and harassment for his work.

The following year, Azerbaijani investigative journalist Khadija Ismayilova was released from jail just three weeks after being awarded the prestigious Prize.

Mahmud Abu Zeid “Shawkan” spent five years of in prison and was released in March 2019, although he is still required to spend 12 out of 24 hours in a police station.

Since 2013, six Laureates have been released after receiving the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano Award:



Selected press coverage of the 2019 World Press Freedom Prize:

Deutsche Welle (5/7/2019)
Toronto Telegraph (5//2019)
New York Times (8//2019)
Boston News (8/5/2019)
ABC News online (2/5/2019)
Le Figaro (10/4/2019)
Mumbai News (8/5/2019)
Singapore Star (9/5/2019)
Rio de Janeiro News (8/5/2019)

Israel Herald (8/5/2019)
BBC Burmese (20/4/2019)
Nigeria Sun (8/5/2019)
Russia News (8/5/2019)
RSF (11/4/2019)
Reuters (8/5/2019)
United Nations (10/4/2019)

For a comprehensive overview of media coverage, see attached annex (800 articles).

More information, visit:

<https://en.unesco.org/prizes/guillermo-cano>