

# Journalist Ian Urbina Honored With the Polk Award for International Reporting for Investigation With The New Yorker

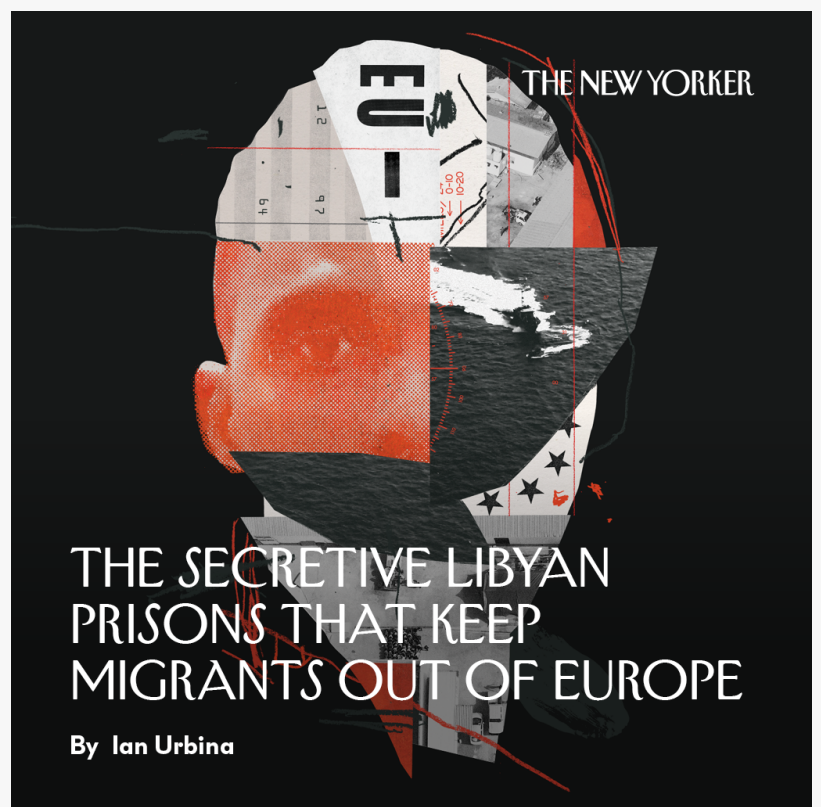
*Ian Urbina, founder and director of The Outlaw Ocean Project, was honored with the Polk Award for International Reporting for investigation with The New Yorker*

WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, UNITED STATES, February 21, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Long Island University (LIU) has announced the winners of the [George Polk Awards](#), honoring journalists in 15 categories for their reporting in 2021.

[Ian Urbina](#), founder and director of [The Outlaw Ocean Project](#), was honored with the award for International Reporting for his investigation published in the New Yorker Magazine, "The Secretive Prisons That Keep Migrants Out of Europe."

The story, published in November 2021, revealed that the European Union equipped and trained Libyans to intercept migrants from sub-Saharan Africa at sea and hold them in secret prisons. Led by Urbina, a team of four reporters went to Tripoli, Libya, to investigate the role of the E.U. and Italy in funding Libya's corrupt and brutal Coast Guard, which aimed to catch migrants before they reach Europe, and effectively turned a blind eye to the ghastly conditions inside Libyan detention centers.

While reporting on the story, the team was taken captive and disappeared into a secret prison by the Libyan Intelligence Service, long affiliated with one of Libya's most powerful militias, the Al-Nawasi Brigade. They were released after six days in captivity.



Cover of article "The Secretive Prisons That Keep Migrants Out of Europe" in The New Yorker written by Ian Urbina

“This award belongs to a huge and daring and tireless team that helped me report the story, get out of Libya alive, and craft something with true impact,” said Ian Urbina. “A special thanks belongs to Joe Sexton, Pierre Kattar, and Mea Dols, who were in Libya with me”.

The George Polk Awards in Journalism this year honors a wide range of revelatory news coverage including the plot behind a Haitian assassination, the impact of a Madagascar climate disaster, the depth of American political upheaval, the consequences of corporate subterfuge, the victimization of brain-damaged children and factory workers in Florida, and the exploitation of migrants here and abroad. Winners were selected from a record total of 610 submissions of work that appeared in print, online, television, or radio and were nominated by news organizations, individuals or a national panel of advisors.

“Not only did we receive a record number of submissions, but they came from far more sources of investigative reporting than ever before, and dozens in addition to the award winners represented first-class work,” said John Darnton, curator of the awards. “This speaks to the vitality and continued promise of a changing journalism landscape and is reason to feel optimistic about the future of our craft.”

The George Polk Awards were established in 1949 by LIU to commemorate George Polk, a CBS correspondent murdered in 1948 while covering the Greek civil war. The awards, which place a premium on investigative and enterprising reporting that gains attention and achieves results, are conferred annually to honor special achievements in journalism.

It’s among the most prestigious prizes given in the profession of journalism. Urbina won a previous Polk Award in the category of Foreign Reporting in 2015.

About The Outlaw Ocean Project:

The Outlaw Ocean Project is a journalism non-profit that produces investigative stories about human rights and environmental concerns on the two thirds of the planet covered by water. Investigative reporter Ian Urbina founded the organization after spending years at sea reporting stories about lawlessness on the oceans for the New York Times, and later for The Outlaw Ocean book, published in 2019.

One of the limitations of the traditional model used especially by legacy news outlets, is that worthy investigative stories are typically seen by only a small fraction of the public because these stories get published in just one outlet and typically in just one language. Part of what The Outlaw Ocean Project and Ian Urbina seek to do is not just produce polished narrative investigative journalism, but also convert that reportage into new forms to reach new audiences.

This investigation into the secretive prisons that keep migrants out of Europe was published in 70 news outlets across 33 countries and translated into 12 different languages. This was a huge

accomplishment that speaks to the new model of journalism that The Outlaw Ocean Project is seeking to leverage.

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