

Media innovators, intrepid reporters covering global hotspots tapped for prestigious international journalism awards

NEW YORK CITY, UNITED STATES, May 24, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The International Center for Journalists (ICJ) announced its annual Knight International Journalism Awards, recognizing excellent reporting that makes a difference in the lives of people around the world. The winners are a team of Ukrainian journalists whose searing images showed the world Russia's brutal siege of Mariupol; an Afghan TV reporter whose investigations uncovered gross mismanagement of COVID-19 resources; and a media visionary who pioneered online reporting and exposed corruption in El Salvador.

ICJ also is recognizing the Netherlands-based media organization Bellingcat and its executive director, Christo Grozev, for their innovative work debunking Russian disinformation about the war in Ukraine and linking the Kremlin to the poisoning of opposition figures. Grozev and Bellingcat will receive the ICFJ Innovation in International Reporting Award.

The recipients, most of whom have faced great personal risk reporting from some of the world's most dangerous places, will be honored at ICFJ's 2022 Tribute to Journalists on Nov. 10 in Washington, D.C. The event, to take place in person and broadcast online, will be hosted by CNN anchor Wolf Blitzer, who will serve as master of ceremonies for the 10th year.

"These journalists have uncovered stories the world might never have known about, on the horrors in Mariupol, the attempts on the lives of Russian opponents, corruption in El Salvador, human rights abuses in Afghanistan and more," said ICFJ President Sharon Moshavi. "They put their lives on the line to fight propaganda and disinformation spread by dangerous, powerful people. Every day, they demonstrate a fearless commitment to reporting the truth."

The Ukrainian team, reporting for the Associated Press, stayed in Mariupol as Russian bombs rained down on the city, showing the world what was happening. Their brave coverage captured the human toll of the war, including a pregnant woman carried on a stretcher from a bombed hospital, and mass graves filled with the bodies of Ukrainian citizens. These iconic photos stood as shocking evidence of the devastation that Russia sought to deny. For this outstanding work under great stress, the AP team – visual journalist Mstyslav Chernov, freelance photojournalist Evgeniy Maloletka and freelance video producer Vasilisa Stepanenko – will receive an ICFJ Knight International Journalism Award. Freelancers, who too often go unrecognized, are contributing essential reporting in Ukraine, deepening the world's understanding of the conflict.

Also receiving an ICFJ Knight International Journalism Award is Anisa Shaheed, who worked as a television reporter for TOLONews, Afghanistan's first 24/7 news network, until Kabul fell to the Taliban. Known for intrepid coverage of major stories – from the vicious attack on a maternity hospital to government mishandling of COVID-19 resources – Shaheed faced a dual threat as a woman journalist in Afghanistan. After the Taliban returned in 2021, rolling back women's rights and threatening journalists with death, she was forced to flee along with thousands of her colleagues and fellow citizens.

Carlos Dada, the founder and director of the Salvadoran news site El Faro (The Lighthouse), was tapped to receive the ICFJ Knight Trailblazer Award. A leading force for independent and high-quality journalism in Central America, El Faro was the first digital-only media outlet in Latin America. Under Dada's visionary leadership, it has fearlessly covered human rights violations, corruption, inequality and the aftermath of the country's civil war. El Faro's exposés put the outlet at odds with the Salvadoran government and its allies. This year, Canada's Citizen Lab revealed that the phones of 22 of El Faro's journalists, including Dada's, were repeatedly hacked by Pegasus spyware.

ICFJ's Innovation in International Reporting Award will go to Bellingcat and Christo Grozev, the Bulgarian-born executive director for the groundbreaking organization. Grozev and his team have used open-source intelligence, data mining and citizen crowdsourcing to link Russian operatives to attempts to murder leading opposition figures. They identified two Russians behind the poisoning of double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter in England, as well as the poisoning of opposition leader Alexei Navalny. He and his colleagues also uncovered evidence that senior Russian officers were complicit in the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 over Ukrainian airspace. Bellingcat is transparent about their unconventional data-gathering methods, and their results are unparalleled in an age when Russian President Vladimir Putin maintains an iron grip on information in Russia. Currently, they are using their innovative approaches to debunk Russian disinformation about the war in Ukraine. CBS's "60 Minutes" recently highlighted Bellingcat's efforts to compile evidence of Russian atrocities in Ukraine.

"These brave journalists take risks to tell important stories in places such as Ukraine, Afghanistan and El Salvador," said Jim Brady, vice president of journalism at the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. "We are so thankful for the work they do every day, unveiling truths on the battlefield, exposing corruption and using data mining to learn government secrets. Knight is proud to support ICFJ in bringing their work to light and giving them the recognition they deserve."

These recipients will be honored alongside Andrea Mitchell, NBC News' chief foreign affairs correspondent and chief Washington correspondent, as well as host of MSNBC's "Andrea Mitchell Reports." ICFJ [announced in March](#) that the veteran journalist will receive its Founders Award for Excellence in Journalism in tribute to her career of more than five decades. Over the years, she has covered breaking news, presidential campaigns, and major international stories,

providing expert analysis and tenacious interviews that hold world leaders to account.

The [ICFJ Tribute to Journalists 2022](#) will take place at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center on Nov. 10 in Washington, D.C., where attendees can meet these outstanding journalists in person. It also will be aired live online to a wider international audience.

The ICFJ Knight International Journalism Awards are supported by Knight Foundation, which funds the ICFJ Knight Fellowships. The award winners were selected by a [distinguished panel of media leaders](#).

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