

Journalists honoured for courageous reporting

NEW YORK, US: Journalists from Cameroon, Mexico, Thailand, and Yemen were honoured last week at the Committee to Protect Journalists' 27th annual International Press Freedom Awards for courageous work amid risks such as imprisonment, threats, and exile.



Christiane Amanpour.

The families of two recently murdered former International Press Freedom Awardees - [Pavel Sheremet](#) of Ukraine, and [Javier Valdez Cárdenas](#) of Mexico - also attended the event. The crowd of nearly 1,000 stood to honour the two journalists and their loved ones following a [video tribute](#) to their work and to CPJ's efforts to combat impunity.

"All of us in this room lose sleep over the safety of those who work for us, or with us, in difficult and dangerous places," said David Rhodes, president of CBS News and chair of the awards dinner. "Like all of the news organisations here tonight, we support journalists willing to take risks on behalf of their readers, listeners, and viewers - and their right and need to be informed."

The evening's host, chief international correspondent for CNN and CPJ board member, Christiane Amanpour, also reminded guests of the importance of American leadership on press freedom, saying, "We need the US to be a beacon - a defender, not a destroyer, of First Amendment values everywhere. The brave journalists we honour tonight certainly think so. They have paid dearly, some with their lives or liberty, to report the news."

Thai reporter [Pravit Rojanaphruk](#), who faces sedition charges for his critical reporting on Thailand's junta, received his award from *Financial Times* US managing editor Gillian Tett. Veteran journalist and *60 Minutes* correspondent Bill Whitaker presented an award in absentia to [Ahmed Abba](#), a Cameroon correspondent for Radio France Internationale who has been imprisoned since 2015 on terrorism charges for his reporting.

Academy award-winning actor Meryl Streep presented [Patricia Mayorga](#) with her award. Mayorga, a correspondent for Mexico's *Proseco* and founder of the Free Journalism Network, was forced to flee Chihuahua state after death threats for her reporting on corruption and human rights. Miriam Elder, world editor at *BuzzFeed News*, presented the award to [Afrah Nasser](#), an independent Yemeni blogger living in exile in Sweden.

[Judy Woodruff](#), managing editor of "PBS NewsHour," received the inaugural [Gwen Ifill Press Freedom Award](#) for her work in advancing press freedom. Woodruff has covered politics and other news for more than three decades at CNN, NBC, and PBS, and is a founding co-chair of the International Women's Media Foundation. The award is named in honour of the late journalist and CPJ board member Gwen Ifill, who co-anchored *PBS NewsHour* with Woodruff.

"I dedicate this award to all journalists across the land, who are determined to stay true to the facts, true to their mission, despite the efforts to silence or intimidate them," Woodruff said.

The event was held at the Grand Hyatt New York and included an appeal during the evening that was matched by the John

S. and James L. Knight Foundation. “I offer a special salute of thanks to our dinner chair, David Rhodes, president of CBS News,” said Kathleen Carroll, chair of CPJ's board. “David is an eloquent advocate for the cause that brings us together tonight. Under his leadership, we have so far raised over \$1.9 million to help journalists in trouble.”

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