

Press release
Leipzig, July 3, 2012

“Prize for the Freedom and Future of the Media” goes to Mexico, Hungary and Germany

Ana Lilia Pérez from Mexico, the Hungarian journalists-team Balázs Nagy Navarro and Aranka Szávuly as well as Bettina Rühl will receive the Prize on October 8 in Leipzig

LEIPZIG. This year’s “Prize for the Freedom and Future of the Media” is awarded to the Mexican journalist Ana Lilia Pérez, the Hungarian journalists-team of Balázs Nagy Navarro and Aranka Szávuly as well as the German journalist Bettina Rühl, who reports from Africa for years. With the prize, the foundation honours four individuals, who bravely and courageously show commitment to the freedom of press.

The prize, which is endowed with 30.000 Euros, will personally be awarded to the laureates on October 8, 2012 in Leipzig.

„The everyday life of this year’s laureates reflects the whole spectrum of mechanisms threatening the freedom and future of the media. From legal restrictions under the cloak of legitimacy, subtle intimidations and existence-threatening sanctions to death threats and even murder. If there were not always people who cannot be intimidated and who give a voice to those who have none, the freedom of press and media would already be lost.”, said Stephan Seeger, managing director of the Media Foundation, explaining the motives of the jury for this year’s choice.

The investigative journalist **Ana Lilia Pérez** is one of the most respected reporters in Mexico. Since 2003, she has worked for the magazines “Contralínea” and “Fortuna”. She also publishes in major Mexican newspapers like “La Jornada” or “Milenio”. In addition, Pérez works as a free author and has published several books about her investigations. For years, Pérez reveals the machinations of organized crime and its accomplices in politics and therefore hovers in a constant danger to life. Her work is accompanied by persecution, arrest warrants and even death threats. In her book “El Cártel Negro”, which has been published in December 2011, Pérez continues her long-standing investigations about illegal business of the state oil company “Petróleos Mexicanos”.

Laureates 2001 – 2011

2001

Prof. David Protes
Renate Flottau
Thomas Mayer

2002

Grigory Pasko
Jolana Voldánová
Simone Wendler

2003

Daoud Kuttab
Gideon Levy
Vladimir Mostovoy
Netzwerk Recherche e. V.

2004

James Nachtwey
La Voz de Galicia
Journalisten helfen
Journalisten e. V.

2005

Seymour M. Hersh
Anna Politkovskaya †
Hans-Martin Tillack
Britta Petersen

2006

Fabrizio Gatti
Alina Anghel
Prof. Dr. Volker Lilienthal

2007

Akbar Ganji
Dr. Wolfram Weimer
Vasil Ivanov

2008

Alan Johnston
Susanne Fischer
Win Tin

2009

Roberto Saviano
Dušan Miljuš
Ahmed Altan

2010

Sayed Yaqub Ibrahim
Kurt Westergaard
Assen Yordanov

2011

Oleg Kaschin
Fahem Boukaddous
Stefan Buchen

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More information about previous laureates and the Media Foundation can be found at:

www.leipziger-medienstiftung.de

Politicians, businessmen and the powerful drug cartels are involved in these. Since 2008, the journalist has revealed several scandals in the company and received several death threats since then.

At the end of 2011, two colleagues of Pérez were tortured and assassinated. Currently, Ana Lilia Pérez is a guest of the “Hamburger Stiftung für politisch Verfolgte” (“Hamburg Foundation for Politically Persecuted”).

For her articles and books, Pérez was honoured by UNICEF, the Mexican Press Club and the Association of Latin-American Journalists.

The two Hungarian journalists **Balázs Nagy Navarro** and **Aranka Szávuly** are vice-presidents of the executive board of the “Independent Trade Union of television and film makers in Hungary” and, until recently, were editors of the public Hungarian television “MTV”.

On December 10, 2011, after a scandalous blurring out of Zoltan Lomnici, the former Head of the Hungarian Supreme Court, in the public television news, Nagy Navarro and Szávuly initiated a three-weeks hunger strike protesting against news manipulation of pro-government responsible of the channel. On the 17th day of the hunger strike, Nagy Navarro and Szávuly were dismissed illegally. After their dismissal they have not been allowed to enter the public media buildings despite their rights as trade union leaders. Half a year later, Nagy Navarro was allowed by court order to pick up his personal belongings from the building.

With the entry into force of the internationally controversial Hungarian media law in January 2011, the leading positions of public broadcasting have been filled with cadres close to the ruling party “FIDESZ”. According to information of numerous employees of the stations, many of them are falsifying the news almost daily.

To force the dismissal of the responsible of news manipulation, Nagy Navarro and Szávuly started a hunger strike on December 10 2011, which continued until December 31. Shortly before, both editors were dismissed, although they enjoy protection from dismissal as trade unionists. Since their public protest, Nagy Navarro and Szávuly are often defamed or criticized by FIDESZ-controlled media outlets. When asked about his commitment, Nagy Navarro said: “I must always remember, that elsewhere people are risking their lives for civil rights. I am just risking my job”.

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Bettina Rühl works as a freelance journalist and feature author with a focus on Africa since 1988. She works for cultural programmes, radio-feature and political editorial staff of several stations of the First German Television ARD and Deutschlandfunk Radio. Since April 2011, she is freelance correspondent for Africa in Nairobi. Bettina Rühl also writes for newspapers and a news agency.

Since the mid-nineties of the last century, Bettina Rühl investigates in many African countries. For example, she travelled to Algeria during the civil war and reported of the everyday life, which was marked by terrorism. Since 2001, Rühl edits the large themes escape, migration and civil war. Therefore, she investigated in Dadaab, the largest refugee camp in the world.

In 2011 and under the most sensitive conditions, Bettina Rühl reported about the situation in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, which has been branded by the long-standing civil war.

Her investigations are only possible with careful preparation, a thorough understanding of regional features and, if necessary, a contingent of reliable bodyguards.

In 2000, Bettina Rühl received the “Medienpreis der Kindernothilfe” (“Media Award of the Kindernothilfe”) for her radio-feature “Krieg der Kinder” (“War of Children”) about child soldiers in Sierra Leone. In 2011, her ARD radio-feature “Die Macht der Warlords von Mogadischu” (“The power of the warlords of Mogadishu”) was awarded the “Medienpreis Entwicklungspolitik 2011” (“Media Award of Development Policy 2011”) in the category radio.

Since 2001, the Media Foundation awards its “Prize for the Freedom and Future of the Media” to journalists, publishers and institutions who show a strong personal commitment to the freedom and future of the media. The prize is also intended to keep alive the memory of the Peaceful Revolution of October 8, 1989 in Leipzig, when protesters demanded “a free press for a free country.”

For more information, please visit our website at:

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