

Selected quotes+ excerpts

Meryl Streep [00:02:30]: Whether covering the pandemic or protests, journalists everywhere are under attack. The very truth they seek to bring us is under attack.

Lester Holt [00:03:30]: Rarely in our lifetimes has the need for accurate and timely information been greater. We are awash with misinformation and lies. The pandemic has emboldened autocrats everywhere to crack down on dissent and civil liberties.

Christiane Amanpour [00:09:30] : The four journalists whose stories we are hearing, give us a glimpse into the battle for press freedom. In honoring their struggle and their sacrifice we send a signal of hope and solidarity to the thousands of other journalists who endure attacks, the loss of livelihood, the loss of liberty, and sometimes even the loss of life that comes with being an independent voice in so much of the world.

Joel Simon, CPJ Executive Director [00:26:30]: We all have the same rights, whether guaranteed in the First Amendment, or in international law. But we still need the professionals who go out every day and take the risks, ask the hard questions, gather the facts... But there are risks for those who challenge power and who dare to tell the truth.

Quotes from interview with Amal Clooney

Amal Clooney [00:31:30]: I think anger drives a lot of what I do, because when I read about what's happening in many places in the world, I just feel a sense of outrage that those in power are abusing their power.

Amal Clooney[00:32:30]: I didn't start my career thinking I'm going to focus on cases involving journalists, I decided to focus my career on cases involving human rights and you can't defend human rights if journalists can't do their work. You can't defend democracy if you don't have a thriving and independent media

Quotes from awardees

Dapo Olorunyomi (speech): For Africa to pull through in this difficult environment of the 21st century, we need a swell of diverse opinions, a depth of contention and regimes of rigorous debates, protests and dissents. We cannot ignore the fact that the vehicle to transmit and mediate these assets of democracy is a press that is free, vibrant, and independent.

Svetlana Prokopyeva (speech): In today's Russia, journalism is often equaled to crime. We are sliding into totalitarianism – again. Because if there is no freedom of speech, other freedoms are out of reach.

Shahidul Alam (livestream): We are at a time when the media is under threat across the globe. And I think it is time for the global community collectively to recognize the role that the media plays. This award is not just for me but for all the people who campaigned for me.

Yeganeh Rezaian (quoted in livestream, speaking to Mohammad Mosaed's case): I am an Iranian journalist, I was detained for over two and a half months in solitary confinement. It's like being alive but forced into a grave... We know that there are forces in the system who do not want the truth to be shared with the outside world. He [Mohammad] is being punished only for being a very truthful journalist.