



SOPA Announces Winners of the 2020 Awards for Editorial Excellence

- Awards recognize the best journalism in Asia and play a vital role in encouraging the highest editorial standards in the region
- Special tribute video showcased journalists who were injured while reporting on past year's social unrest in Hong Kong

Hong Kong, August 26, 2020 – The Society of Publishers in Asia (SOPA), a Hong Kong based not-for-profit organization, presented 91 awards for outstanding journalism at the annual SOPA Awards ceremony on Wednesday evening, continuing to recognize and encourage editorial excellence in Asia amid challenging times.

The ceremony was held virtually for the first time in its 22-year history due to the Covid-19 situation and travel restrictions.

The awards attracted more than 750 English and Chinese-language entries submitted by international, regional and Chinese-language media. Entrants competed in 17 categories ranging from photography to business and investigative reporting to public service journalism.

2019 was a tough year for journalists in the region, given the threats to press freedom in various countries and the social unrest in Hong Kong. A number of awards were presented for extraordinary reporting on the protests that gripped Hong Kong for months and reverberated around the world, including “Thin Yellow Line” by *South China Morning Post*, “Revolution 101” by *Reuters*, “Hong Kong’s ‘Water Revolution’” by *Financial Times*, and “Hong Kong in Turmoil” by *Bloomberg*.

During the event, SOPA also screened a video featuring journalists who were injured in the course of covering the protests in Hong Kong, including Veby Mega Indah of *Suara*, an Indonesian news site, who was blinded in one eye. Not only have those journalists contributed valuable on-the-ground dispatches of one of the most important social movements of the year, but they also demonstrated unwavering commitment to truth, integrity and high standards of journalism under tremendous pressure.

Although reporting on events in Hong Kong attracted much of the attention, there was outstanding reporting in other areas worthy of recognition. The top award – the SOPA Award for Public Service Journalism – was presented to a consortium of *VICE Indonesia*, *Jakarta Post*, *Tirto* and *BBC Indonesia* for its reporting on the widespread but hidden crime of sexual assault on university campuses. It was a perfect example of how the pooling of scarce resources among media outlets can generate huge social impact and inspire public conversations.



Some publications received multiple accolades as they swept up both the Award for Excellence and the Honorable Mention in a single category, such as *Nikkei Asian Review* in The Scoop Award (Regional), *The Wall Street Journal* in The Scoop Award (Global) and Business Reporting (Global), *Initium Media* in Reporting on the Environment (Chinese) and Feature Writing (Chinese), and *The Reporter* in Explanatory Reporting (Chinese) (see the full list of finalists and winners [here](#)).

To widen the pool of participants, Google News Initiative (GNI), our Platinum sponsor, offered to subsidize first-time entrants. Among them were *Environmental Reporting Collective*, which won the Award for Excellence in both Reporting on the Environment and Journalistic Innovation (Regional); *Myanmar Now* took home the Honorable Mention in both Feature Writing and Investigative Reporting (Regional); and *Hong Kong Free Press* won the Honorable Mention in Explanatory Reporting (Regional).

The more than 750 entries were evaluated by a panel of judges from around the globe, comprised of journalists, editors and columnists from leading publications and scholars from media departments of prestigious universities. The panel was led by Head of Judges Dr. Jeffrey Timmermans, Associate Professor at The University of Hong Kong's Journalism and Media Studies Centre (JMSC).

“Congratulations to all the winners for their outstanding work. This has been a very challenging year. But they have achieved extremely high standards and shown the value of top quality journalism,” said Cliff Buddle, Editorial Committee Chair of SOPA.

Irene Jay Liu, Google News Lab Lead, APAC, Google News Initiative, said: “It is been so inspiring to see how across the region, journalists have courageously met the need for timely, accurate information in moments of crisis, demonstrated the value of the stories to help the world better understand this region and proven again and again the critical importance of accountability and investigative reporting in uncertain times. Google is honoured to support the SOPA Awards and celebrate the work they do.”

The SOPA 2020 Awards for Editorial Excellence is supported by Google News Initiative, as Platinum Sponsor. FleishmanHillard is the public relations partner and BlueCurrent is the social media partner.

Virtual ceremony playback, full winners list and judges' comments can be found <https://www.sopawards.com>.



About SOPA

The Society of Publishers in Asia (SOPA) was founded in 1982 to champion freedom of the press, promote excellence in journalism and endorse best practices for all local and regional publishing platforms in the Asia-Pacific region. SOPA is a not-for-profit organization based in Hong Kong and representing international, regional and local media companies across Asia. Since 1999, the Society of Publishers in Asia has been host to the prestigious annual SOPA Awards for Editorial Excellence, which serve as the world-class benchmark for quality journalism in the region. www.sopasia.com; www.sopawards.com; [SOPA LinkedIn](#).

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