



SOPA Announces Winners of 2023 Awards for Editorial Excellence

Hong Kong journalism educator Keith Richburg and Myanmar Now editor Swe Win feature as speakers

HONG KONG, June 15, 2023 -- The Society of Publishers in Asia (SOPA), a Hong Kong-based not-for-profit organization dedicated to pursuing excellence in journalism, today announced the winners of its annual Awards for Editorial Excellence in recognition of outstanding works of journalism over the past year in the Asia Pacific region.

The ceremony took place on Thursday evening June 15 at an in-person gala dinner in Hong Kong, celebrating the 25th anniversary of the awards.

Global, regional and Chinese media outlets submitted more than 800 entries across 21 categories, including a new category of Excellence in Bahasa Indonesia News Reporting. More than 100 awards were given out.

The evening featured two speakers well-versed to talk about the current challenges of producing independent journalism in the region. Swe Win, editor-in-chief of Myanmar Now, sat down with The New York Times's Vivian Wang, last year's winner of the SOPA Award for Young Journalists. Keith Richburg, director of HKU Journalism, had a fireside chat with Hong Kong journalist and media trainer Karen Koh. HKU Journalism has administered the SOPA Awards since 2011.

It was a big year for China news with a once-in-a-decade top leadership transition and an about-face on Covid management policy.

The Wall Street Journal won the global scoop award for "The New Lieutenants," revealing details of the closely held changing of the guard. The Economist's intricate portraits of the Chinese leader "Xi Jinping: the making of a dictator" and "The Prince," won top global awards in both the Explanatory and the Audio Reporting categories. Initium Media won the top Chinese-language Feature Writing award for "When the White Paper Penetrates Thick Walls of Chinese Universities," and The New York Times won an Honorable Mention in the Explanatory Reporting category for "'Zero Covid' and Its Unraveling."

Human trafficking was also big issue this year with several publications winning accolades for their work, including in the Investigative Reporting category where the top regional award went to VOD for "Enslaved," and Vice World News won Honorable Mention among global publications for "The Human Trafficking Victims Being Forced to Scam the World: An Investigation."

Abuses in Myanmar dominated the Human Rights Reporting category with Reuters winning the top global award for "From Rohingya to razed villages: Myanmar army's mounting atrocities." Myanmar Now won the regional Award for Excellence for "Myanmar's many



forms of resistance,” while Frontier Myanmar won Honorable Mention for a powerful first person portrayal by one of its staff in “I reported on the military’s abuses, then I became a victim.”

In the inaugural Bahasa Indonesia News Reporting category, a joint venture by Mongabay, BBC Indonesia and The Gecko Project, “‘The promise was a lie’: How Indonesian villagers lost their cut of the palm oil boom,” won the top award.

Nikkei Asia took home both the global Award for Excellence and Honorable Mention in Reporting on Women’s Issues for “Women’s Wealth in Asia” and “Abortion in Asia: The limits of choice,” respectively.

Several entrants this year benefitted from a subsidy on entry fees for first time participants and small media companies from Google News Initiative, including India’s Fifty Two, which won a regional Award for Excellence in Technology Reporting for “Human Touch,” an examination of the role of ordinary people working in AI in India.

The SOPA Award for Public Service Journalism was presented to ProPublica for “The Night Raids,” its report on complicity and consequences on innocent civilians of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.

“Congratulations to all the award winners and to those who received honorable mentions; your work represents the best of the best in journalism in our region. We at SOPA are proud to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the awards with such outstanding reporting across all platforms,” said Madeleine Lim, senior executive editor at Bloomberg News and Chair of the SOPA Editorial Committee.

The SOPA 2023 Awards Gold sponsor is Google News Initiative. Supporting partners are Merz Productions and Telum Media.

About SOPA

The Society of Publishers in Asia (SOPA) is a Hong Kong-based not-for-profit organization that was founded in 1982 to champion freedom of the press, promote excellence in journalism and endorse best practices for publishers operating in the Asia Pacific region.

Today, SOPA is the voice of Asia’s media and publishing industry, and continues to work to uphold media standards and freedoms while celebrating and supporting professional journalism and publishing. The SOPA Awards for Editorial Excellence are the annual flagship awards, serving as a regional benchmark for quality, professional journalism and have been given out for 25 consecutive years since 1999.

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