



# COURAGE IN JOURNALISM AWARDS

## Honoring the Courage Required to Report the News

Each year the IWMF highlights the importance of freedom of the press and the courage required in many countries to report the news by awarding *Courage in Journalism Awards* to women from around the world. Following a worldwide call for nominations, a panel of prominent women journalists selects winners from a pool of some 30 nominations.

Recipients of *Courage in Journalism Awards* risk their lives to report the news. Braving political pressure, war and violence, they write stories that unearth corruption and human rights abuses and give voice to victims of war and other atrocities. The *Courage Awards* are presented each year at ceremonies in New

York and Los Angeles. The IWMF also holds various other events to allow the winners to share their stories with the public.

The *Courage Awards* make a difference in the lives of women like 2005 winner Sumi Khan. Now a senior reporter for Ekushey Television in Bangladesh, Khan was brutally beaten and stabbed by three unknown assailants on her way to her office in 2004 when she wrote for the *Daily Samakal*; her forehead, mouth and hands were cut with knives.

Despite this incident and other threats, Khan continues to report. Receiving the *Courage Award* has brought recognition to her situation. "As a *Courage Award*

winner I'm more committed," she said. "The people in power will always try to stop or disturb me, but I am doing my duty for the tortured and victimized people, who have no power but honesty... I will continue my fight for justice with a strong pen and integrity; the *Courage Award* gives me the confidence to fulfill this commitment."



2005 *Courage Award* winner Sumi Khan.

In addition to Sumi Khan, recent winners of *Courage in Journalism Awards* include:

- **Farida Nekzad (2008), Afghanistan.** Nekzad frequently receives phone calls and email messages threatening her life. Despite working under tremendous pressure at a time when women journalists in particular are being threatened for their reporting in Afghanistan, Nekzad is committed to staying in her country to work toward a free press and greater equality for women journalists.
- **Lydia Cacho (2007), Mexico.** Cacho has endured numerous death threats because of her work reporting on domestic violence, organized crime and pedophilia. In 2005, she was arrested on libel charges and driven to a jail 20 hours from her home in Cancun, with officers hinting that there was a plan to rape her. In May 2009, she continued to be persecuted; she received a message on her blog threatening to "slit her throat."
- **Huda Ahmed, Shatha al Awsy, Sahar Issa, Alaa Majeed, Zaineb Obeid and Ban Adil Sarhan from McClatchy's Baghdad bureau (2007), Iraq.** These reporters constantly worked under duress in a war-torn country. They dodged gun battles and tiptoed around car bombs just to do their jobs. They risked death constantly to do their work and lost family members and friends in the war.
- **Gwen Lister (2004), Namibia.** In 1988, the offices of Lister's newspaper, *The Namibian*, were nearly destroyed by a group advocating white supremacy. They firebombed the newspaper's office, put tear gas in the office air system and attempted to intimidate Lister and other reporters with death threats.
- **Anna Politkovskaya (2002), Russia.** Before she was murdered in October 2006, Politkovskaya was a reporter for the independent newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*. She endured harassment and death threats from the Russian government and Chechen rebels when covering the war in Chechnya.

To read about other *Courage Award* winners, visit [www.iwmf.org/categorylistyear.aspx?c=cijwinner](http://www.iwmf.org/categorylistyear.aspx?c=cijwinner).