



Frontline reporter of Ukraine conflict among winners of the 2023 Kurt Schork Awards in International Journalism

Named in honour of the late American journalist, Kurt Schork, the Awards recognise the courageous work of freelance journalists, local reporters and news fixers from around the world

LONDON (October 3, 2023) – The 2023 winners of the [Kurt Schork Awards in International Journalism](#) have been announced. Now in their 22nd year, these Awards recognise brave journalists for their reporting on conflict, corruption and injustice, and are named in honour of American freelance journalist Kurt Schork who was killed in Sierra Leone while on assignment for Reuters in 2000.

This year's News Fixer Award goes to Syrian Kurdish journalist Hisham Arafat. Since 2011, Arafat has been actively covering the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, collaborating with both local and international news agencies and media outlets. Utilising his vast network and understanding of the local context, he was able to secure rare access to former Islamic State fighters held in a crowded prison guarded by the Kurds. Judges commended Arafat for his unflappable courage, journalistic skill, linguistic agility and logistical acumen whilst operating in extremely dangerous and pressurised circumstances.

The News Fixer Award aims to recognise the rarely credited yet often at-risk individuals who typically act as the foreign correspondent's eyes and ears on the ground. The prize was inspired by the freelance journalist, author and friend of Kurt Schork, Anna Husarska, and pays tribute to the vital role that these unsung heroes play in coverage from difficult, dangerous and hostile locations.

Léa Polverini, a French freelance journalist and editor covering international news and human rights abuses, wins the 2023 Kurt Schork Freelance Award. Polverini wins the award for her series looking at Muslim minorities subject to persecution in China's Xinjiang territories. For one of the stories, Polverini travelled across the South-West of Kazakhstan, meeting with survivors of re-education camps and collaborating with activists, NGOs, researchers and lawyers to build trust with interviewees and ensure their safety. The judges noted that her work "put faces to the victims and showed a side of a country that too many people, or entities, are willing to ignore."

Asami Terajima wins the 2023 Local Reporter Award. Terajima is a journalist at the Kyiv Independent, Ukraine's leading English-language online newspaper. Reporting from Ukraine's eastern Donbas region, Terajima shines a light on the brutal realities of war through the eyes of Ukrainian soldiers. The judges described Terajima's work as "a compelling [and] very useful addition to coverage of the biggest story in a generation."

This year, the majority of applications for these Awards were from Ukraine. In recognition of the challenges journalists face in reporting from the region, the Kurt Schork Memorial Fund is pleased to make a contribution of US \$5,000 to the Kyiv-based [Institute of Mass Information](#), to support their on-going work monitoring attacks on journalists and providing safety, security and other expert training for frontline reporters.



The three winners will each receive a cash prize of US \$5,000 and will be spotlighted through a multi-media campaign on the Thomson Reuters Foundation's social media channels ([X](#), formerly Twitter, [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#)). Polverini and Terajima will also speak in a panel session, moderated by international correspondent Yalda Hakim, at the Foundation's annual Trust Conference. Taking place in London on **19 and 20 October**, the conference will be free to attend. Click [here](#) for the full agenda and [here](#) to register.

One of the award judges, New York Times International Correspondent Matthew Mpoke Bigg, will be joining the winners to speak on the panel, hosted in partnership with the Kurt Schork Memorial Fund.

Bigg commented:

"It's an honour to be involved as a judge. Kurt and I worked together in Sierra Leone and I was with him on the day that he was killed, so it's particularly meaningful. The Awards draw attention to the role that freelancers, fixers and translators play and few issues could be more important in the world of international news. This is because of a mismatch between their role in news gathering and story production and the way in which they are rewarded and supported. I have seen the imbalance recently while working in Ukraine. Thankfully, things are changing and the Kurt Schork Awards are part of that change. It can't come too soon."

NOTES TO EDITORS

Please see below details of the 2023 finalists and judges for each category.

Finalists

News Fixer Award:

- Oleksandr (Sashko) Chubko (Ukraine)
- Alla Didur (Ukraine)
- Marta Rodionova (Ukraine)
- Anna Vlasenko (Ukraine)

Freelance Journalist Award:

- Liz Cookman (UK)
- Lorcan Lovett (UK)
- Anastasia Magazova (Ukraine)
- Marcos Mancero (Ecuador)

Local Reporter Award:

- Ibrahim Adeyemi (Nigeria) - special mention



- Jennifer Avila (Honduras)
- Maha Hussaini (Palestine)
- Derick Matsengarwodzi (Zimbabwe)

Judges

- Julian Borger, World Affairs Editor, The Guardian
- Dan De Luce, National Security and Global Affairs Reporter, NBC News
- Giles Elgood, Long-time Editor, Reuters
- Julian Evans, Writer and Journalist
- Angus MacSwan, Chief Desk Editor Europe, Middle East and Africa, Reuters
- Matthew Mpoké Bigg, International Correspondent, New York Times

About the Kurt Schork Memorial Fund

Named in honour of American freelance journalist Kurt Schork, the Kurt Schork Memorial Fund exists to keep the world aware of the debt owed to brave journalists who work hard – often at great personal risk – to report on conflict, corruption and injustice. The annual Kurt Schork Awards in International Journalism uniquely honour the work of freelance journalists, local reporters and news fixers, who often otherwise receive little recognition.

About the Thomson Reuters Foundation

The Thomson Reuters Foundation is the corporate foundation of Thomson Reuters, the global news and information services company. As an independent charity, registered in the UK and the USA, it works to advance media freedom, foster more inclusive economies, and promote human rights. Through news, media development, free legal assistance and convening initiatives, it uses the combined power of journalism and the law to build global awareness of critical issues faced by humanity, inspire collective leadership and help shape a prosperous world where no one is left behind.

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