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### **Winners of 2017 Kurt Schork Memorial Awards announced**

**London (October 4, 2017)** – The winners of an award to honour some of the most courageous yet least recognised journalists around the world were announced today, alongside an inaugural award for news fixers.

Now in their 16<sup>th</sup> year, the Kurt Schork Memorial Awards are named in honour of American freelance journalist Kurt Schork who was killed in Sierra Leone while on assignment for Reuters in 2000.

John Beck, a British journalist based in Iraq, has won the Freelance category award for his reporting about the war in Western Mosul for Al Jazeera. The judges praised his stories for going “beyond the frontline and reporting about the innocent victims of war”, deemed to be in the spirit of Kurt Schork.

New Delhi-based Indian journalist Soma Basu has won the Local Reporter category for her originality, attention to detail and impressive writing. The judges said: “tackling sensitive issues such as the skin trade and organ trafficking was risky and a story that had never been written about before”. Her winning stories were published by Indian media platform Youth Ki Awaaz and expose the harrowing ordeal of Nepali women who are trafficked and forced to sell their skin to supply Indian’s booming cosmetic surgery industry.

This year, 177 journalists from 63 countries submitted 531 published stories. A shortlist of eight in each of the two categories was judged by Reuters Global Editor Alessandra Galloni, Eye Witness Media’s Sam Dubberley, and Cardiff University’s Professor of Journalism Richard Sambrook.

The Kurt Schork Memorial Awards will also confer the inaugural News Fixer Award to recognise the unsung heroes of modern journalism at the November ceremony. Rarely credited and usually in danger, these on-the-ground ‘guides’ often also act as translators, drivers and assistant reporters. It is the fixers’ local expertise, as well as their network of official – and unofficial – contacts that provides the raw source material for the out-of-town correspondents.

The new prize was inspired by the freelance journalist, author and friend of Kurt Schork, Anna Husarska, and pays tribute to the vital role that news fixers play in coverage from difficult, dangerous and hostile locations.

30 nominations from 11 countries were submitted to the category in total, with the award going to Iraqi news fixer Makeen Mustafa. Mustafa was nominated three times by international journalists working in Erbil who hired him as their fixer during assignments in Iraq.

The judges - BBC's Hugh Schofield, Associate Global Editor of the Daily Mail Online Jake Simon Wallis, and former US Ambassador to the UN Sam Power - agreed that Mustafa "has demonstrated tremendous bravery, judgment, relentlessness, linguistic versatility, and resourcefulness in his work for a range of journalists. He is passionately dedicated to his country and ensuring the outside world understands the trials and hopes of its people."

The three category winners will each receive a cash prize of US \$5000 to be presented at a prestigious awards ceremony in the Thomson Reuters auditorium, Canary Wharf, London, on Tuesday evening, November 7th.

Since 2009, the awards ceremony has been hosted by the Thomson Reuters Foundation, the charitable arm of Thomson Reuters.

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