

Freedom of speech award for South Sudan journalist

Braving intimidation and violent attacks is the norm for journalists working in South Sudan and Josephine Achiro Fortelo, a radio journalist from South Sudan, has received repeated threats. She will receive the global Johann-Philipp-Palm-Award for Freedom of Speech and the Press 2018, in Schorndorf/Germany on December 2.



Josephine Achiro Fortelo.

As a radio journalist, Achiro Fortelo is the local coordinator of the Cross-Border Network (CBN), a DW Akademie project. She will visit Deutsche Welle's headquarters in Bonn on December 5.

In her daily work for the CBN, Achiro Fortelo is committed to independent reporting and freedom of expression. The association of 22 radio stations in the border region between Uganda and South Sudan was founded in June 2017 on the initiative of DW Akademie. The network aims to support the peace process by providing independent information.

The CBN brings together journalists from South Sudan and Uganda to share information across borders.

Due to South Sudan's civil war and the mass exodus of refugees, people on both sides of the border have a need for special information: they want to know about the situation back home and are looking for answers to practical, sometimes vital questions as well as an exchange with the local population in the host countries.

According to Reporters Without Borders, journalists in South Sudan are subject to intimidation and violent attacks. Many

editorial offices have had to shut down. Achiro Fortelo has received repeated threats as a result of her work.

Critical exchange

Based in South Sudan's capital, Juba, Achiro Fortelo became known as a presenter for the radio station Bakhita. Her programs enable people of different ethnicities and convictions to have their say, with the aim of promoting critical exchange and providing information for minorities.

In its announcement of the award winners, the Palm Foundation stated that, "Josephine Achiro Fortelo is an exceptional role model for the struggle for freedom of speech and press as an indispensable prerequisite for democracy."

Along with the South Sudanese journalist, the Bosnian human rights activist, photographer and journalist Štefica Gali will also receive an award at the ceremony.



Freedom of expression vital for peace in South Sudan

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With additional funding from Germany's Federal Foreign Office, the European Union and others, DW Akademie is active in approximately 50 developing and emerging countries. Together with its partners, DW Akademie is a leader in the development of free media systems, and in creating access to information and setting standards for education and independent journalism.

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