

First winner of Anja Niedringhaus Courage in Photojournalism Award

WASHINGTON DC, US: The inaugural winner of the Anja Niedringhaus Courage in Photojournalism Award is freelance photographer Heidi Levine. The International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) created the award to honour the courage and dedication of Pulitzer Prize-winning AP photographer, Anja Niedringhaus, who was killed while reporting in Afghanistan in 2014.



Heidi Levine

"We are proud to honour and celebrate the courage of women photojournalists who risk their lives documenting conflict and war while shedding light on moments of humanity," IWMF Executive Director Elisa Lees Muñoz said. "The images captured by the award nominees represent a collective vantage point on some of this decade's most dangerous conflicts. Their work helps us better understand the world and inspires us to take action."

The award jury of accomplished journalists with the guidance of the award's advisory committee recognized Jerusalem-based photojournalist Heidi Levine as the winner for her stunning and powerful images. "Her courage and commitment to the story in Gaza is unwavering. She documents tragic events under dire circumstances, while displaying a depth of compassion for the people she encounters," the jury wrote in their selection statement.

"I am honoured to be recognized with this award dedicated to celebrating the legacy of Anja," Levine told the IWMF. "Anja was both a photojournalist and a person I admired, respected and often consulted with in the field under extreme circumstances. There was an incredible professional bond and sense of trust, a sisterhood so many of us felt, and she is greatly missed by us all."

Conflict photojournalist

Levine is an American photojournalist who has made a career of working in conflict and post-conflict areas. She has covered the critical moments in the Middle East including the revolutions in Egypt, Libya and Syria, the plight of Iraqi refugees living in Jordan, Syria and Sweden, and spent one month embedded with US troops in Iraq, focused on documenting the lives of female soldiers. She has also worked in Afghanistan, Georgia and India. Her photographs have appeared, often as cover stories, in leading international publications.

The award will be presented to Levine at a ceremony in Berlin on June 25, 2015. The Howard G. Buffett Foundation provided the funding for the \$20,000 prize.

Two additional photojournalists received recognition from the jury. Photographer Anastasia Vlasova received an honourable mention for her great courage and dedication to covering the ongoing conflict in Eastern Ukraine at extreme personal risk. AP photographer Rebecca Blackwell received an honourable mention for her coverage of the Central African Republic, demonstrating tremendous courage working in difficult conditions.

Anja Niedringhaus

The Anja Niedringhaus Courage in Photojournalism Award will be given annually to a woman photojournalist whose work reflects the courage and dedication of Niedringhaus. Niedringhaus (1965-2014) dedicated her life to documenting conflict and its impact on the people of war-torn regions. A native of Germany, she began full-time work as a photojournalist in 1990 when she joined the European Pressphoto Agency (EPA). One of her first assignments was covering the war in the Balkans where journalists were regularly targeted by Bosnian Serb forces.

In 2002, Niedringhaus began working for the AP as a travelling photographer. She primarily covered the Middle East, Afghanistan and Pakistan. For her compassion and commitment to capture the whole picture, the IWMF recognised her with the 2005 Courage in Journalism Award.

IWMF

For 25 years, the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) has been dedicated to strengthening the role of women journalists worldwide. The media is not truly free and representative without the equal voice of women.

Our work celebrates the courage of women journalists who overcome threats and oppression to report and bear witness to global issues. Through our programs and grants we empower women journalists with the training, support, and network to become leaders in the news industry. For more information, go to www.iwmf.org.

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