

LAUNCH OF THE SHIREEN ABU AKLEH PRIZE

**For the courage and commitment of women
journalists**

IFJ / UPF

Union internationale de la presse francophone
73, rue de Clichy, 75009 Paris - Tél : + 33 (0) 1 47 70 02 80 - sg@presse-francophone.org



Shireen Abu Akleh, 03.04.1971-11.05.2022



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I. PRESENTATION OF THE IFJ

Established in Paris on June 13, 1926 on the initiative of Georges Bourdon of the French Union of Journalists, the **International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)** brought together numerous unions of journalists from all over the world. It is based on solidarity and mutual aid among journalists around the world.

Today the **IFJ** is the largest journalists' organization in the world, representing 600,000 journalists and media professionals from 187 unions and associations in 146 countries.

The **IFJ** speaks on behalf of journalists within the United Nations (UNESCO, International Labor Organization, Human Rights Council) and within the trade union movement.

It promotes international action to defend press freedom and social justice through strong, free and independent unions of journalists.

Its Global Charter of Ethics adopted in 2019 in Tunis serves as a guide for everyone.

The **IFJ** boosts respect for safety and the freedom to inform and be informed.

It promotes a draft International Convention against the impunity of those who commit or sponsor the murders of journalists.

It organizes a collective response to numerous attacks and supports journalists' unions in their fight for equality between women and men, fair salaries, and decent working conditions.

It opposes all forms of discrimination and condemns the use of the media for propaganda purposes.

II. PRESENTATION OF THE UPF

The International Francophone Press Union (UPF) is the oldest association of francophone journalists recognized by international organizations (UN, UNESCO, etc.).

The UPF was born on May 13, 1950 as the International Association of Francophone Journalists (AIJLF) on the initiative of journalists from France and Canada. From the outset, the UPF worked to build ties around the world, first to Belgian and then Swiss colleagues, before expanding its network to Africa and the rest of the French-speaking world.

The focus of the UPF is on promoting and advancing its mission based on the concept of Francophonie. It has thus become the precursor of what began as an associative movement and was institutionalized twenty years later with the establishment in 1970 in Niamey, Niger, of the first inter-governmental organization of the Francophonie: The Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACCT). It was only in 1986 in Versailles that a conference of heads of state would initiate the launch of an institutionalized framework that would later become a



summit, held every two years under the aegis of an organization created for this purpose: the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF).

The UPF is an international non-governmental organization (INGO) recognized by major international organizations, such as the UN, UNESCO and the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF). It brings together a wide network of journalists, managers and editors from the written and audiovisual press, spread across over fifty countries on five continents.

III. CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION

Alongside freedom of expression, the safety of journalists is one of the essential conditions for the exercise of their profession. However, throughout the world, the situation with safety of journalists has been significantly deteriorating to the extent of affecting their physical integrity.

This reality is particularly relevant to women journalists who are the targets of verbal abuse, hate speech, social media harassment, but also physical attacks – rape and murder.

Many of our female colleagues thus risk their lives to produce their reports and continue to practice their profession. It is a tragic and heartbreaking reality that many women journalists have been killed while doing their job, or because of their job. Here are just a few names of women who came from diverse backgrounds but have shared the same fate: they lost their lives just for practicing journalism with integrity: **Shireen Abu Akleh, Anna Politkovskaïa, Ghislaine Dupont, Daphné Carouana Galizia...**

We must never forget the courage and dedication of these women journalists who chose the most perilous locations and issues for informing the public. It is important to recognize their merit and condemn the acts of violence committed against them. This is essential in order to continue to defend press freedom for everyone.

IV. OBJECTIVES

Many female journalists have and may become victims of attacks motivated by their courageous work and their commitment to the truth. These attacks constitute serious violations of press freedom, jeopardizing the safety of journalists around the world. It is essential to recognize and condemn these acts of violence, and to continue defending the freedom of expression and the safety of journalists regardless of their gender.

In this alarming context, the International Francophone Press Union (UPF) and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) have decided to jointly create the annual Shireen Abu Akleh Prize that will acknowledge the courage and commitment of women journalists throughout the world.



Shireen Abu Akleh was a top reporter who worked for 25 years for *Al Jazeera*. She was recognized for her courageous reporting and commitment to the truth. Her valuable contribution has left an indelible mark on journalism.

Shireen Abu Akleh was killed on May 11, 2022 in Jenin, in a Palestinian refugee camp while reporting live. She wore all the insignia necessary for working in the field: a press vest and a helmet. A bullet fired by an Israeli soldier hit her in the back of the head, just below her protective helmet, and was fatal.

The establishment of this award is all the more important since, on October 27, 2023, her memorial and the street bearing her name at the entrance to the refugee camp in Jenin, on the very spot where she fell, were destroyed by the Israeli army.

V. EXPECTED RESULTS

Sadly, stories similar to Shireen's are common: journalists, particularly women, become victims of violence or threats because of their work. They are regularly targeted for reporting on sensitive issues, political conflicts or human rights violations. **It is therefore crucial to recognize the danger that women journalists are facing and to condemn these attacks against freedom of the press.** At the same time, it is important to show our support to our female colleagues who are, even today, exposed to similar risks.

VI. BENEFICIARIES

Women journalists, photo and video reporters holding a professional press card.

VII. ELIGIBILITY

The Shireen Abu Akleh Prize rewards the work of women journalists regardless of their country of origin or engagement, or their working language. All media (paper-based newspaper or magazine, television, radio, web, audio, video, multimedia publication etc.) are eligible.

There is no time limit on the actions that give rise to the nomination.



VIII. SELECTION

The selection is made on the basis of a nomination made by the journalist herself, by the consortium or media at which she works, or on the basis of a proposal made by a third party. To be considered, the nomination must be accompanied by a precise description of the actions that gave rise to it.

The selection is conducted in two stages (pre-selection in September 2024, selection in October 2024, continued into the subsequent years) by a Selection Committee composed of a total of nine persons, including one representative of each the following bodies:

- the UPF
- the IFJ
- the OIF
- the UNESCO
- 5 male or female journalists who are eminent representatives of the profession (list to be specified)

Between the two stages, additional information may be requested from preselected candidates.

IX. MONETARY AWARD

The winner will be awarded a 5000 Euro cash prize.

The selection committee grants itself the liberty to distribute the prize equally between two winners in the event that two candidates tie for the prize.

The award ceremony will take place in December 2024 in Paris during a dedicated event open to the general public.

X. DURATION

The Shireen Abu Akleh Prize will be awarded every year for an indefinite period.

XI. CALENDAR

July 1, 2024 – launch of the call for nominations;

October 15, 2024 – deadline for submitting nominations;



October 15, 2024 - November 15, 2024 – jury instruction;

December 10, 2024 – presentation of the Shireen Abu Akleh Prize on the occasion of the International Human Rights Day.

Nominations should be sent by e-mail in English or French to the following addresses

International Federation of Journalists (IFJ): ifj@ifj.org

International Union of the French-speaking Press (UPF): sg@presse-francophone.org