

Mexican journalist wins Peter Mackler Award for Courageous & Ethical Journalism

Mexican journalist Marcos Vizcarra is the 2017 winner of the Peter Mackler Award for Courageous and Ethical Journalism. The award is made by the Global Media Forum Training Group, the US branch of Reporters Without Borders (RSF), and Agence France-Presse (AFP). It will be presented in a ceremony at the National Press Club on 26 October 2017.



Marcos Vizcarra © [Twitter](#)

Uncovering government corruption, torture

Marcos Vizcarra, 29, currently lives and works in Culiacán, Sinaloa, Mexico reporting on issues related to corruption, violence, justice and human rights for the newspaper *Noroeste*. Vizcarra has focused his research and writing on the enforced disappearances of Mexican civilians, including the government's failure to address the problem in a meaningful way.

In 2016, with the support of the International Center For Journalists (ICFJ), the US Embassy in Mexico, Mexican journalism organisation *Periodistas de a Pie*, and *Noroeste*, Vizcarra published the results of a journalistic investigation into 11 cases of torture committed by the Sinaloa government and prosecutor's office.

His reporting uncovered corruption in the regional government as well as its collusion with the powerful Sinaloa Cartel in dismantling a rival cartel's operations. In the wake of *Noroeste* veteran journalist and AFP correspondent Javier Valdez' murder earlier this year, Vizcarra has continued to work to expose the work of the cartels and corruption within the government that prevents truth from being uncovered.

"Marcos Vizcarra is a rising voice for unrestricted access to truth in a part of the world known for frequent use of violence to silence journalists," said Camille Mackler, Peter Mackler Award project director at the Global Media Forum Training Group. "In today's world, more than ever, we need journalists like Vizcarra, who are willing to stand up to governments and criminals and uphold principles of ethical journalism. By doing so, and while the eyes of the world remain on Sinaloa in the wake of Valdez' brutal death, Vizcarra has become a guiding example to all other journalists in that region and beyond. We are thrilled to recognise him as the 9th winner of the Peter Mackler Award and show him and other journalists like him that their work – and the contributions they make to our global society – do not go unnoticed."

Mexico low on press freedom

Mexico is currently ranked 147th out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders.

Vizcarra said, "I think that in Mexico we are doing better journalism, because I also believe that we have a greater awareness of our role in society: that of journalism that serves to combat corruption and impunity. I believe that this award is a wake-up call to our authorities, because if it is true that we are trying to do better journalism, it is also true that it is becoming more difficult in conditions of violence. I am very grateful to the Mackler family and the organising committee for having chosen me as the winner of this year's Peter Mackler Award, because this is a recognition of Mexican journalism that is seeking to improve things."

Delphine Halgand, the North America director for Reporters Without Borders said, "Mexico continues to be the Western Hemisphere's deadliest country for journalists. Most of these crimes go unpunished, with Mexico's pervasive corruption accounting for the impunity. By awarding Marcos Vizcarra, we pay tribute to the courage of those who refuse to be silenced in Mexico, where at least four journalists were murdered in connection with their work in 2017."

Michele Leridon, AFP's global news director added, "AFP is thrilled with this choice, in a world where the role of journalists is essential for the vitality of democracies. In Mexico, where an AFP journalist was murdered earlier this year, the job to keep others informed is particularly difficult."

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