



SIGNIS Celebrates the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize Honoring Freedom of Expression.

SIGNIS, the World Catholic Association for Communication, celebrates the announcement of the awarding of the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize to Journalists Maria Ressa of the Philippines, Dmitry Muratov of Russia "for their efforts to safeguard freedom of expression, which is a precondition for democracy and lasting peace," according to the president of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, Berit Reiss - Andersen.

In 2012 Ms. Ressa co-founded the investigative digital media company, *Rappler*. As both a journalist and *Rappler's* CEO, she has worked "to expose abuse of power, use of violence and growing authoritarianism in her native country, the Philippines." She bravely used media to criticize the Duterte regime for its anti-drug campaign of widespread extrajudicial killings.

Since 1995 Mr. Muratov has been the editor-in-chief of the independent *Novaja Gazeta*, which reports critically on corruption, illegal arrests, election fraud, and official violence. Six of the publication's reporters have been killed since its founding in 1993. Nonetheless, Mr. Muratov continues to strongly defend reporters' freedom to engage in fact-based journalism.

Ms. Reiss-Andersen added that they "are representatives of all journalists who defend this ideal in a world in which democracy and freedom of press are faced with increasingly adverse conditions."

SIGNIS sees these two colleagues as exemplars of the journalist's vocation to report the truth, which historically is often threatened by political, economic, and even religious interests. They will inspire our world network of communications professionals to continue to defend freedom of expression and protest any attack on journalists seeking the truth.

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The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Ms. Ressa and Mr. Muratov is ultimately an affirmation of the liberating power of truth mediated through a free press committed to ethical, professional journalism. In that regard, we applaud editors and reporters who choose “what to report, and how to report it – that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict.”ⁱ SIGNIS supports such peace journalism.

Without truth at its core, communication, as we have seen too often recently, is not genuinely human, but disinformation or propaganda or worse. Our SIGNIS patron, St. Oscar Romero, was a communicator of the truth, using church media to counter what Salvadoran Jesuit theologian Jon Sobrino says Romero saw as “silences, cover-ups, distortions, trivializations and lies” emanating from the Salvadoran media in the face of widespread official torture and murder.

We invite the members of our network of Catholic communicators to take the occasion of the Nobel Peace Prize as a moment to learn from the courageous digital work carried out by Ms. Ressa and the prophetic voice of Mr. Muratov’s publication. They both denounce the corruption of the powerful and serve as signs of hope for us and especially for young journalists from SIGNIS and from all over the world.

Sincerely,

The SIGNIS Executive Committee

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ⁱ Lynch, J. & McGoldrick, A. (2005). Peace Journalism.

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