

## Statement by the Committee of Supporters to the Anna Politkovskaya Award

Letter to the Editor of The Sunday Times and Novaya Gazeta

7 October 2012

Sir, Today marks the sixth anniversary of the murder of the Russian investigative journalist Anna Politkovskaya. To date, the killers and those who ordered her murder have still not been brought to justice.

We the undersigned are supporters of the human rights organisation RAW in WAR (Reach All Women in War). On Friday 5 October, we presented the annual Anna Politkovskaya Award, set up to recognise women defending human rights in zones of war and conflict, often at great personal risk, to Marie Colvin (The United States), the brave Sunday Times war correspondent, who was killed in Syria.

We presented this year's award to Marie Colvin for her courage, integrity and passion to give a voice to the women, children and communities blighted by the violence and horrors of conflict and war. Marie reported from some of the worse conflict zones including in Sierra Leone, Chechnya, Kosovo, Sri Lanka, East Timor and from the heart of the Arab Spring. She was killed on 22 February 2012 in Syria, while bringing to the world the truth about the targeting and killing of civilians by the government. She spoke truth to power. Just like Anna did and paid for it with her life.

Like Anna, Marie did much more than simply reporting the story of violence. In East Timor, in 1999, she was credited with saving the lives of 1,500 women and children besieged by Indonesian-backed forces. While other international journalists left, she refused to leave until the group was evacuated to safety four days later.

It came as no surprise that Marie defied the Syrian authorities ban on foreign reporters, in order to ensure that the world would hear about the massacres of civilians that continue there to this day. Marie lost her life, when the Syrian government army shelled the building she and other journalists used as a makeshift media centre.

As the situation in Syria is getting worse by the day, we also honour the many Syrian women journalists and human rights defenders, like last year's award winner Razan Zaitouneh, who despite the danger they are facing, continue to speak out about the brutality currently facing the people of Syria.

In October 2007 we presented the first Anna Politkovskaya Award to Natalia Estemirova for her courage in seeking and telling the truth about the torture, disappearance and murder of civilians in Chechnya. We were shocked and outraged by the killing of Natalia on 15 July 2009. And as in Anna's case no one has been brought to justice for her murder.

We call again on the Russian government to bring to justice those who killed Anna and Natalia and their colleagues, and to end the killings and persecution of journalists and human rights defenders in the Russian Federation. We call on the international community to stand in solidarity with all journalists and human rights defenders in Syria and to demand an end to the bloodshed and the killing of civilians. We call again on the world's leaders to pledge to do everything in their power to protect journalists and human rights defenders who work in areas of war and conflict.

We owe it to the memory of Anna, Natalia and Marie to protect the very few who still speak out on behalf of those to whom nobody wants to listen.

Signed,

The members of the Committee of Supporters to the Anna Politkovskaya Award:

Nobel

Women's Initiative (Mairead Maguire, Jody Williams, Shirin Ebadi, Betty Williams, Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Leymah Gbowee, Tawakkol Karman, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf), Tatiana Yankelevich, Desmond Tutu, Jon Snow, Jane Wellesley, John Pilger, Jeremy Bowen, Andre Glucksmann, Gloria Steinem, Sergey Kovalyov, Alexei Simonov, Vladimir Bukovsky, Svetlana Gannushkina, Lyudmila Alekseeva, Karinna Moskalenko, Mara Polyakova, Malalai Joya, Halima Bashir, Leila Alikarami, Razan Zaitouneh, Gillian Slovo, Eva Hoffman, Adam Michnik, Oleg Panfilov, Oleg Orlov, Ella Polyakova, Tom Stoppard, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Natasha Kandic, Elisabeth Rehn, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Mariane Pearl, Azar Nafisi, Asma Jahangir, Carl Gershman, Hina Jilani, Susan Sarandon, Jane Birkin, Sophie Shihab, Naomi Klein, Sister Marya Grathwohl, OSF, Sister Helen Prejean, Ariel Dorfman, Vanessa Redgrave, Eve Ensler, Michael Cunningham, John Sweeney, Jonathan Schell, Noam Chomsky, Marina Litvinenko, Lucy Ash, Sussan Deyhim, Heidi Bradner, Desmond O'Malley, Anne Nivat, Annabel Markova, Frank Judd, Nicolas Rea, Anthony Giddens, Nazir Ahmed, Mukesh Kapila CBE, Molly Meacher, Vivien Stern, Helena Kennedy QC, Yakin Erturk, Elena Kudimova, Andrey Nekrasov, Meglena Kuneva, Peter Gabriel, Stina Scott, Anna Stavitskaya, Dubravka Ugresic, Katrina vanden Heuvel, Victor Navasky, Aidan White, Holly Near, Elizabeth Frank, Elizabeth Kostova, Bill Bowering, Irena Grudzinska Gross, Jenny Diski, Monica Ali, Isa Blyden, Nayereh Tohidi, Claire Bertschinger, Tsvetana Maneva, Elena Jandova, Julian Popov and others.

For the full list of the Committee of Supporters to the Anna Politkovskaya Award please click [here](#).