



## Reuters Wins SOPA Award for Public Service Journalism for “Erasing the Rohingya” Story

- *Reuters wins the top award for second year in a row*
- *The Associated Press wins Scoop Award for story on first gene-edited babies*
- *Panel discussion on #MeToo looks at what's next and fears of backlash*

**Hong Kong, May 30, 2019** – The Society of Publishers in Asia (SOPA), a Hong Kong-based not-for-profit organization, named Reuters as the winner of the SOPA Award for Public Service Journalism for its reporting on the Rohingya crisis. The announcement was made on Wednesday evening at the SOPA 2019 Awards Gala Dinner attended by about 270 media executives, editors, journalists and industry practitioners.

In its “*Erasing the Rohingya*” story, Reuters uncovered the leading role of Myanmar soldiers and paramilitary police behind one of the most brutal massacres in modern history, one that sparked an international outcry and drew attention to the plight of more than 730,000 Rohingya refugees. Drawing on first-hand interviews with Buddhist villagers, retired soldiers, local officials and police officers, Reuters explained how Myanmar troops killed Rohingya Muslims – high-school kids, teachers, fishermen and ordinary villagers.

It is the second year in a row that Reuters has won the top award with a story on the Rohingya crisis. The award coincided with the release of the two Reuters reporters – Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo – who were imprisoned in Myanmar for their work covering the crisis. The two reporters sent a video message to thank all the media organizations for their support while in prison.

The winner of the Scoop Award went to The Associated Press, for its story on “*Chinese Researcher Claims First Gene-Edited Babies*”. The story, which presents a scientific development with the potential to significantly impact mankind, triggered an immediate reaction from Chinese authorities to halt the work and launch an investigation. This put the spotlight on the ethics of gene-editing.

These awards were among the 48 SOPA Awards for Editorial Excellence across 17 categories announced at the event (see the full list [here](#)). This year, SOPA award entries exceeded the eight hundred mark for the second year running, with English- and Chinese-language submissions by international, regional and local media in the region, showing widespread recognition for the prestigious awards.

“Congratulations to all the winners! By recognising their excellence, we hope to inspire and encourage journalists to keep producing work of the highest quality. Journalists in the region are working in increasingly difficult conditions. The jailing of the Reuters reporters in Myanmar for simply doing their job is a glaring example of this disturbing trend. I am delighted that they have finally been released. Protecting press freedom in Asia and around the world is as important as it has ever been,” said Cliff Buddle, Editor, Special Projects, at the South China Morning Post and Chair of the SOPA Editorial Committee.



The entries were assessed by a judging panel appointed by the Journalism & Media Studies Centre (JMSC) of the University of Hong Kong. Led by Jeffrey Timmermans, SOPA Awards Head of Judges and Associate Professor at JMSC, the panel comprised more than 80 media professionals, including journalists, editors and columnists from some of the region's most influential publications, along with academics from a number of Asia's leading journalism schools.

The gala dinner also featured a panel discussion on the #MeToo movement. Two years on from the emergence of #MeToo in the US, the panel looked at how it has led to changes in the workplace and played out in different countries, how the media confront allegations of sexual harassment, what's next, and whether fears of a backlash are warranted.

The panel was moderated by Jodi Schneider, co-leader of Bloomberg's Women's Voices project in Asia. Jodi was joined by Sandhya Menon, a high-profile #MeToo campaigner in India, Emily Steel, a Pulitzer-winning journalist at The New York Times who helped uncover allegations surrounding former Fox News commentator Bill O'Reilly, and Fiona Nott, CEO of The Women's Foundation, which works to improve equality for women in Hong Kong.

The SOPA 2019 Awards for Editorial Excellence are supported by Google News Initiative and Facebook Journalism Project (as Platinum Sponsors) and ZA International (as Silver Sponsor). FleishmanHillard, PR Newswire and High Technology Printing Group provide SOPA with support respectively on public relations, newswire and printing services.

Event highlights, photos and judges' comments can be found on:  
<https://www.sopawards.com>.

### **About SOPA**

The Society of Publishers in Asia (SOPA) was founded in 1982 to champion freedom of the press, promote excellence in journalism and endorse best practices for all local and regional publishing platforms in the Asia-Pacific region. SOPA is a not-for-profit organization based in Hong Kong and representing international, regional and local media companies across Asia. The Society of Publishers in Asia is also host to the prestigious annual SOPA Awards for Editorial Excellence, which serve as the world-class benchmark for quality journalism in the region. [www.sopasia.com](http://www.sopasia.com); [www.sopawards.com](http://www.sopawards.com); [SOPA LinkedIn](#).

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