



## PRESS RELEASE

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# MARCOS VIZCARRA OF MEXICO NAMED 2017 WINNER OF PETER MACKLER AWARD FOR COURAGEOUS & ETHICAL JOURNALISM

**THE GLOBAL MEDIA FORUM TRAINING GROUP, THE US BRANCH OF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS (RSF), AND AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE (AFP) TODAY ANNOUNCE THAT MEXICAN JOURNALIST MARCOS VIZCARRA IS THE 2017 WINNER OF THE PETER MACKLER AWARD FOR COURAGEOUS AND ETHICAL JOURNALISM. THE AWARD WILL BE PRESENTED IN A CEREMONY AT THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB ON OCTOBER 26, 2017.**

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 organization *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.

Vizcarra's 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 Mr. 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 Mr. Valdez' brutal death, Mr. Vizcarra has become a guiding example to all other journalists in that region and beyond. We are thrilled to recognize 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 is currently ranked 147th out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders.

Marcos 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 organizing 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 said « 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."



*About the Peter Mackler Award for Courageous and Ethical Journalism:*

The Peter Mackler Award for Courageous and Ethical Journalism was founded in June, 2008 to honor the memory of Peter Mackler, a Brooklyn-born thirty-five year veteran journalist who championed ethical journalism and freedom of expression. A long-time bureau chief and correspondent for Agence France-Presse (AFP), Mackler helped transform the news agency into the international competitor that it is today. Mackler also founded the Global Media Forum, which trained journalists and non-profit organizations to use the media as a tool for social change, and Project Plato, teaching journalism as a life skill to disadvantaged teenagers.

The Peter Mackler award honors journalists who fight courageously and ethically to report the news in countries where freedom of the press is either not guaranteed or not recognized. The Award is administered by Global Media Forum, the US branch of Reporters Without Borders, and Agence France-Presse.

The Award ceremony will take place on October 26, 2017 at 6PM at the National Press Club in Washington, DC, 529 14th St. N.W, 13th Fl.; Washington, DC 20045. The ceremony will be followed by a networking hour. Tickets can be bought on the Peter Mackler Award website.

*About AFP:*

AFP is a global news agency delivering fast, accurate, in-depth coverage of the events shaping our world from conflicts to politics, sports, entertainment and the latest breakthroughs in health, science and technology. With 2,300 staff spread across almost every country, AFP covers the world 24 hours a day in six languages. AFP delivers the news in video, text, photos, multimedia and graphics to a wide range of customers including newspapers and magazines, radio and TV channels, web sites and portals, mobile operators, corporate clients as well as public institutions.

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