

**May 8, 2015**

**Press Release**

**Mika Yamamoto Memorial Foundation**



**The 2nd "Mika Yamamoto International Journalist Award" Winner Selected**

**Spanish Photo Journalist Ricardo Garcia Vilanova** awarded for covering battlefields in the Middle East and Africa in his works including **"Childhood under Siege"**

- The award ceremony to be held at Japan Publishers Club on May 26, 2015 -

The selecting committee of Mika Yamamoto Memorial Foundation held on May 5, 2015 nominated Ricardo Garcia Vilanova as the winner of the 2nd "Mika Yamamoto International Journalist Award".

**- Winner and the Works**

Ricardo Garcia Vilanova (43) / Freelance Photo Journalist

Series of articles including "Childhood Under Siege" and relating activities covering battlefields in the Middle East and Africa.

- Main Prize: Commemorative Shield
- Prize Money: 500,000 yen
- Selecting Committee: Yasunori Kawakami (journalist, former Asahi Shimbun Middle East Area Chief Correspondent), Hazuki Saisho (non-fiction writer), Yoshiharu Sekino (explorer and professor of Musashino Art University) Akihiro Nonaka (representative of Asia Press International) and Toshihiro Yoshida (journalist)

**- Comment of the Committee -**

Conflicts in Syria and Iraq had been largely treated in the media in Japan following the killing of journalist by the ISIS. However, it was focused on as one of the incidents and did not be an opportunity for the Japanese people to know about the real life of the people who live in battlefield and under oppression.

Ricardo Garcia Vilanova kept on covering the situation of Syria by actually visiting the zone several times since the beginning of the conflict in 2011. Although he was captured by the ISIS from September 2013 to March 2014, after the release he continued with his career covering countries such as Central Africa, Libya and Iraq. Later on, he joined the Kurdish Army in the Siege of Kobani in Syria to cover the site where the ISIS that captured him was actually confronting.

His works show mourns of the people, children with adult-like eyes, decomposed bodies

and ruined towns... Every each one of his impressive photos sticks into the heart of the people just like fragments of shells. All these scenes make us who are living far away recognize the reality that there are people living exposed to the disasters of war currently, in the same age. He is appropriate to be awarded for the overwhelming power of his works and his strong spirit that motivates him to return to the site in spite of the cruel experience he had.

#### **- Mika Yamamoto International Journalist Award**

Mika Yamamoto Memorial Foundation was founded to carry out the will of the journalist Mika Yamamoto of Japan Press who was shot dead during her coverage in Syria in August 20, 2012. Our purpose is to cover the conflicts that are occurring in many different places all over the world and the reality of the people living there, and support and train young journalists.

Mika Yamamoto International Journalist award is given to a journalist who is evaluated based on two criteria; one is to be largely enthusiastic to report to the world injustice and irrationality of the conflicts through the actual coverage using their eyes and ears. Another one is to have humanistic point of view reporting to the world with deep empathy the reality of the people who are surviving between life and death in the conflict zone.

The journalists who are committed in international coverage based on the above criteria are subject to the award and the winner is rewarded with a commemorative shield and the prize of 500,000 yen.

#### **- Contacts**

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