

Pakistan reporter wins AFP Kate Webb Prize

Asad Hashim, a freelance journalist has won the 2018 Agence France-Presse Kate Webb Prize. The prize was awarded to Hashim for his coverage of the plight of ethnic Pashtuns and blasphemy issues in his native Pakistan.

The prize, with a 3,000 euro purse, honours journalists working in perilous or difficult conditions in Asia, and is named after a crusading AFP reporter who died in 2007 at the age of 64, after a career covering the world's trouble spots – including Afghanistan.

Courageous, independent reporting

Hashim, 33, was recognised for a series of articles on ethnic Pashtuns and other groups caught up in the Pakistan military's fight against the Pakistan Taliban.

These included an investigative report into enforced disappearances allegedly conducted by the military and a reporting mission to the South Waziristan tribal region – birthplace of Pakistan's Taliban – to look into the deadly civilian toll from landmine explosions.

The award also recognised his work on other highly sensitive issues, such as Pakistan's blasphemy laws and the country's judicial system.



Freelance reporter Asad Hashim. © [Twitter](#).

"These are challenging times for journalists in Pakistan and Asad Hashim's work stands out for the kind of courageous, independent reporting the Kate Webb Prize was created to recognise," said AFP's Asia-Pacific regional director, Philippe Massonnet.

Increasingly restrictive reporting environment

"His deeply-researched articles tackle sensitive subjects with an admirable balance of passion, commitment and journalistic detachment," Massonnet said.

"I am honoured by the jury's decision to select my work this year," Hashim said after learning he was the winner of the 2018 prize.

"I consider the award not just a recognition of my work, but of all Pakistani journalists, who have been working in an increasingly restrictive reporting environment over the last year," he added.

The prize will be formally presented at a ceremony in March.