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The Associated Press's Maggie Michael, Nariman Ayman El-Mofty, and Maad al-Zikry Win 2019 Michael Kelly Award

Journalists honored for chronicling the civil war in Yemen and bringing the nature of the conflict alive through their reporting

Washington, D.C. (May 23, 2019) – Reporter **Maggie Michael**, photographer **Nariman Ayman El-Mofty**, and video journalist **Maad al-Zikry** are the winners of [Atlantic Media's 16th annual Michael Kelly Award](#) for their multifaceted reporting for **The Associated Press** on the civil war in Yemen. The journalists were awarded a prize of \$25,000 tonight at a ceremony in Washington.

“The on-the-ground complexities of the ongoing civil war in Yemen, supported and exacerbated by outside powers, are nearly impossible for outsiders to follow. Confronting continual threats from all sides, these journalists filed stories for The Associated Press that consistently broke new ground, brought the nature of the conflict vividly alive, and exposed the ruthless cynicism of those perpetuating the conflict,” the judges said.

Given annually, the Michael Kelly Award honors journalists whose work exemplifies the fearless pursuit and expression of truth, qualities that defined Michael Kelly's own career. Kelly, who served as editor of two Atlantic Media publications—*The Atlantic* and *National Journal*—was the first journalist killed while covering the beginning of the Iraq War in 2003.

In nominating Michael, El-Mofty, and al-Zikry, the AP described their reporting as having had a real-world impact. In southern Yemen, authorities released at least 80 prisoners from Emirati-controlled prisons exposed by the AP reporting team as sites where sexual assault was being used as a torture tactic. On the other side of the conflict, leaders of the Houthi rebels launched an investigation in the wake of the AP's reporting on torture prisons run by the rebels across northern Yemen. The AP's reporting on starvation in Yemen riveted public attention and forced official action by the United Nations and others—including an emergency initiative to rush food to a remote district in Houthi territory suffering famine conditions that had escaped U.N. notice. In response to the team's investigation of corruption in food distribution, the U.N.'s World Food Program went public with a threat to cut off help to Houthi-controlled areas unless the rebels stopped diverting aid from the hungry.

The awards ceremony tonight also recognized journalists with three other news organizations as finalists: **Hannah Dreier of ProPublica** for her [series](#) on gangs and immigration depicting the plight of Latino teenagers trapped between the MS-13 gang and the U.S. government; **Christine Kenneally of BuzzFeed News** for her [coverage](#) of horrific child abuse at a

Catholic orphanage in Vermont; and **Connor Sheets from Alabama Media Group** for his year-long [coverage](#) of police corruption

Four judges selected the finalists: **Rania Abouzeid**, Middle East-based journalist, author of *No Turning Back: Life, Loss, and Hope in Wartime Syria*, and the winner of the 2015 Michael Kelly Award; **Deborah Fallows**, co-author with her husband James Fallows of *Our Towns: A 100,000-Mile Journey into the Heart of America*, author of *Dreaming in Chinese: Mandarin Lessons in Life, Love and Language*, and a contributing writer for *The Atlantic*; **Jim Kelly**, books editor of *Air Mail* and the former editor of *Time* magazine; and **Cullen Murphy**, editor at large of *The Atlantic* and author most recently of *Cartoon County: My Father and His Friends in the Golden Age of Make-Believe*.

Based in Washington, D.C., Atlantic Media's innovative portfolio of digital, print, event, social, and video platforms includes The Atlantic, National Journal Group, and Government Executive Media Group. Atlantic Media publications and journalists are ineligible for the Michael Kelly Award.

More information on the winner and finalists at kellyaward.com.

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