

The David Astor Journalism Awards Trust

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
Tuesday, 5 February 2013

Rising Star East African Journalists Win the 2013 David Astor Awards

Two exceptional young print journalists from Tanzania and Uganda have been selected as winners of this year's David Astor Journalism Awards.

Features writers Sylvester Ernest, 31, at *The Citizen* in Dar es Salaam, and Patience Akumu, 26, at *The Observer* in Kampala, emerged the winners after a rigorous six-month review and assessment of two-dozen locally nominated candidates.

They now join 12 previous David Astor Award winners as career-long members of an expanding regional network of the most promising next-generation leading journalists in East Africa, supported by The David Astor Journalism Awards Trust.

"Sylvester and Patience are clearly very determined and talented young journalists who are bound to make great contributions to the future of journalism in East Africa," said Jim Meyer, the Trust's Executive Director. "We look forward to supporting their continued professional growth and career development in the years ahead."

Later this year they will take part in individually tailored professional development programmes, designed in consultation with them and their employers, involving three-month work experience attachments with newspapers in the UK or South Africa. They also received nominal cash awards of \$500.

An independent panel of three judges selected the winners after interviewing short-listed finalists in Dar es Salaam on 25th January and in Kampala on 27th January.

The judges were: Michael Holman, former Africa Editor of the *Financial Times* from 1984 to 2002; Jillo Kadida, Chief Court Reporter at *The Star* in Nairobi, who was a 2009 David Astor Award winner; and Oliver Wright, Whitehall Editor of *The Independent* and former News Editor of *The Times* in London.

The candidate-selection process began in May 2012 when all news media houses in the region, as well as local journalists' associations, media trainers, civil society organisations and former editors, were invited to nominate one candidate each for consideration.

Candidates were expected to be at an early stage in their career and had to meet certain key criteria, including solid commitment to the profession, continuing to work in Africa as their long-term career goal, and maintaining the highest ethical standards.

They also had to show some special talent and flair for journalism, and requisite qualities to succeed in the profession, such as critical thinking, courage, self-confidence and drive.

After reviewing written applications from the nominees and examples of their published work, six short-listed candidates were interviewed in Tanzania and seven in Uganda last September. Second-opinion interviews were conducted with the candidates' nominators, employers, and other local sources in October and November, before choosing the finalists.

The runners-up were Alawi Masare and Veneranda Sumila at *The Citizen* in Tanzania, and Sulaiman Kakaire at *The Observer* in Uganda. They each received \$250 and will be offered a second chance to be considered for next year's awards.

The David Astor Journalism Awards Trust is a UK charity founded in 2006 to promote, strengthen and support independent journalism in Africa. It honours the late, distinguished editor of *The Observer* newspaper in London from 1948 to 1975, who was a lifelong champion of African development, human rights and social justice causes.

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, the veteran anti-apartheid campaigner and Nobel Peace Laureate, is Patron of the Trust.

SABMiller plc is currently the Trust's principal sponsor. A grant from the Tanzania Media Fund will support Sylvester Ernest's three-month award programme this year.

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