

# The David Astor Journalism Awards Trust

## NEWS RELEASE

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### Three Exceptional Young Journalists Win the 2011 David Astor Awards

An intrepid crime reporter and a gutsy, resourceful investigative journalist from Kenya join a promising new Tanzanian features writer as winners of the 2011 David Astor Journalism Awards.

Kamore Maina, 25, and Fatuma Noor, 24, both from *The Star* in Kenya, and Erick Mchome, 27, from *The Citizen* in Tanzania were selected from a field of 22 locally nominated candidates, following a rigorous six-month review and assessment process.

Along with nine previous award winners, they now become career-long members of an expanding regional network of the most promising next-generation leading journalists in East Africa.

A panel of three distinguished judges from the United States, the UK and South Africa chose this year's winners after individually interviewing seven short-listed finalists in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam last week.

"We were struck not only by the commitment, enthusiasm and quality of these very exciting young journalists, but by the diversity of their talent and their backgrounds," the judges said.

The judges were: William Carmichael, former head of the Ford Foundation's Africa Program and long-time adviser to Human Rights Watch; Michael Holman, Africa Editor of the *Financial Times* from 1984 to 2002; and Hugh Lewin, former director of the Johannesburg-based Institute for the Advancement of Journalism and member of the Human Rights Violations Committee of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The David Astor Journalism Awards Trust (DAJAT) is a London-based human rights charity that aims to promote, strengthen and support independent journalism in Africa by investing in the professional development of early-career print journalists with the greatest potential to excel in the profession.

“These three outstanding young journalists clearly match the aims of our programme and have very significant contributions to make to the future of journalism in East Africa,” said Jim Meyer, DAJAT’s Executive Director. “We look forward to giving them our full support to develop and fulfil their exceptional potential.”

Each award winner will initially take part in a three-month programme tailored to their particular interests, involving work-experience attachments with newspapers in the UK or South Africa, and then receive continuing support as members of the David Astor Journalism Awards network, with links to media professionals and organisations regionally and abroad. In addition, they each received a nominal cash award of \$500.

The candidate-selection process began in May 2010 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.

There were no age, educational or minimum work experience requirements but 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.

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

After reviewing written applications from all of the nominees and examples of their published work, 12 short-listed candidates were interviewed last September in Kenya and six in Tanzania. Second-opinion interviews were then conducted in October with the candidates’ nominators and employers, as well as other sources, before choosing four finalists from Kenya and three from Tanzania.

The two runners-up in Kenya were Mercy Mwai from *The People Daily* and Nzau Musau from *The Star*. Sharifa Kalokola and Al-amani Mutarubukwa, both from *The Citizen*, were the runners-up in Tanzania. They each received a nominal cash award of \$250.

Established in 2006, The David Astor Journalism Awards Trust honours the late distinguished editor of *The Observer* newspaper in London for 27 years, from 1948 to 1975, who was a lifelong champion of African development and human rights. Its overall objective is to build journalistic capacity in Africa to defend human rights, promote good governance

and further socio-political development. Lord Joel Joffe and Lord Dennis Stevenson of Coddendam are its founding Patrons.

This year's three award winners will join the previous nine in Dar es Salaam from 11th-13th March for an annual weekend networking meeting.

The past award winners are: Murithi Mutiga from *The Sunday Nation*, Jillo Kadida from *The Daily Nation*, and Alex Kiprotich from *The Standard* in Kenya; Marc Nkwame and Jiang Alipo, both from *The Daily News*, and Erick Kabendera formerly at *The Guardian* in Tanzania; and Tabu Butagira from *The Daily Monitor*, and Barbara Among and Raymond Baguma, both from *The New Vision* in Uganda.

Grants from the Open Society Institute and SABMiller plc will fund this year's award programmes.

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