

# DAJAT News

Winter 2008

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## First Award Winners Announced

Following an intensive candidate-assessment process that began in May 2007, the first David Astor Journalism Award winners were announced in January 2008. Murithi Mutiga from *Daily Metro* in Kenya, Valentine Marc Nkwame from *The Arusha Times* in Tanzania, and Tabu Butagira from *The Daily Monitor* in Uganda were chosen from a field of 51 locally nominated candidates.

The two independent judges who made the final selection from among three finalists in each country were: William Carmichael, former Head of the Africa Program at the Ford Foundation in New York, currently a member of the Africa Advisory Committee for Human Rights Watch; and Michael Holman former Africa Editor of *The Financial Times*, who since retiring in 2002 has continued to write about African affairs for the *FT*, *The Times* and *openDemocracy*.

Commenting on the process, Holman said: "It has been a privileged opportunity to play a part in the creation of a network of some of East Africa's most capable journalists, who will surely develop as an influential and inspirational force in the region and beyond."

## Inaugural DAJA Network Meeting

Executive Director Jim Meyer hosted a weekend gathering of the first three award winners in Arusha, Tanzania in March. As the nucleus of what will develop into a regional network linking them with future award winners and with outside support, they had an opportunity to meet for the first time and get to know one another. They also visited the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and met local journalists.

## 2008 Award Programmes

Three-month professional development programmes were designed with each of the winners and their employers, according to their individual interests and needs. The aim was to broaden their exposure by giving them a chance to work with and learn from experienced journalists from outside their own countries.

Murithi Mutiga and Tabu Butagira came to London in June for attachments with British newspapers. Murithi spent nine weeks working at *The Financial Times*, followed by a week each at *The Independent*, *The Guardian* and *The Observer*. Tabu worked at *The Times* for 12 weeks,

rotating among various desks, including foreign and home affairs, politics and business. He also spent time with the leader-writing team, the sub editors and the Times Online.

Marc Nkwame recently completed an attachment at *The Sunday Times* in South Africa. Based in Johannesburg, he also spent a week covering Parliament in Cape Town and a week at the paper's KwaZulu-Natal bureau in Durban.

## Second-Round Candidates

The nominating period for the second round of awards closed at the end of May and a total of 38 nominations were received this time from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The candidates' written applications were reviewed over the summer and interviews were conducted in September and October.

Following further background checks, three finalists from each country have now been selected, including an all-women shortlist in Uganda. The final judging will take place in February 2009. Joining the two previous judges will be Paula Fray, former Editor of *The Saturday Star* in Johannesburg and now Africa Regional Director of Inter Press Service.

## Nelson Mandela Endorses DAJAT

Nelson Mandela lent his endorsement to the David Astor Journalism Awards earlier this year, calling them "a fitting and meaningful way" to honour the late editor of *The Observer* newspaper in London.

"David Astor was one of the best and most loyal friends," the former South African President said in a written statement. "Under him, *The Observer* supported the African National Congress from the early years of apartheid, when we most needed it and when most newspapers ignored it."

Paying personal tribute to the campaigning editor, who died in 2001 at the age of 89, Mandela said: "I will always remember the generosity and loyalty of David, both as a friend and supporter of our movement and South African democracy."

## The Year Ahead

A website is being developed and will be launched in the New Year. The Trust will also begin a fundraising drive for future expansion of its awards programme.

After the next three winners are selected in February, a weekend networking meeting with the original three will be held in Kampala. New candidates from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda will be reviewed and assessed for the third round of awards and finalists will be decided by the end of the year.

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*The David Astor Journalism Awards Trust (DAJAT) is a UK-registered human rights charity working to promote, strengthen and support independent journalism in Africa.*