



Overseas Press Club  
*of America*

## Weekly Bulletin: May 21, 2020


### Greetings!


We hope you enjoy this week's digital newsletter, which includes:

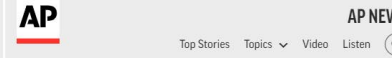
- A preview of an upcoming online event with [Hal Boyle Award winners](#) to launch a series of interviews with this year's OPC Award Winners.
- A look ahead at the lineup of three additional OPC Awards interviews.
- A recap of the OPC's online discussion with Krithika Varagur about "[Saudi Arabia's Global Religious Campaign](#)."
- Updates on OPC member coverage of COVID-19.
- [Resources](#) and webinars for journalists covering COVID-19.
- [People Column](#).
- [Press Freedom Updates](#).


Scroll down for more content, summaries and links to items online.

May 27:  
OPC Award Winners Share Their Stories:  
The Hal Boyle Award










**Making misery pay: Libya militias take EU funds for migrants**

By MAGGIE MICHAEL, LORI HINNANT and RENATA BRITO  
December 31, 2019


TRIPOLI, Libya (AP) — When the European Union started funneling millions of euros into Libya to slow the tide of migrants crossing the Mediterranean, the money came with EU promises to improve detention centers notorious for abuse and fight human trafficking.



**Denied asylum, migrants return to place they fear most: home**

By TIM SULLIVAN  
December 29, 2019

SAN PEDRO SULA, Honduras (AP) — By now, the young couple thought they'd be in the United States. Somewhere, anywhere, in the United States. They thought they'd have jobs — he'd work construction, maybe she'd be a waitress. They thought they'd be safe. They thought they'd have asylum.



**Volunteers step in to keep asylum seekers healthy on border**

By JULIE WATSON  
December 18, 2019

TIJUANA, Mexico (AP) — When the Honduran boy complained of a toothache, Dr. Psyche Calderon asked the obvious question: "When did the pain start?"  
The answer broke her heart.

**Time:** 12:00 p.m. Eastern Time

**Place:** Online via Zoom

***RSVPs are required for this event. Links to the Zoom call will be emailed to registrants two hours before the program begins.***

The Overseas Press Club is launching a series of Zoom conversations in which the head judge of each award interviews the winners. Spearheading the series is OPC Governor Farnaz Fassih, head judge of the Hal Boyle Award for best newspaper, news service or digital reporting from abroad. A team from The Associated Press won the award for "Outsourcing Migrants," an investigative series that showcased the global migration crisis from Latin America to the Middle East. The series exposed how policies in Western and developed nations were creating a huge pool of languishing people.

AP journalists joining the call include Lori Hinnant, Tim Sullivan and Julie Watson. Fassih is a reporter for The New York Times. Previously she was a senior writer for The Wall Street Journal for 17 years and a conflict reporter based in the Middle East.

Segments from the "Outsourcing Migrant" series can be viewed on the links below:

1. [Migrants Endure Rape and Torture on Route Through Yemen](#)
2. [Video: Torture Awaits African Migrants Traveling in Yemen](#)
3. [Making Misery Pay: Libya Militias Take EU Funds for Migrants](#)
4. [Video: EU Funds for Libya Migrants Enrich Abusers Instead](#)
5. ['Everybody Cries Here': Hope and Despair in Mexican Shelter](#)
6. [Migrants Stuck in Lawless Limbo Within Sight of America](#)
7. [Denied Asylum, Migrants Return to Place They Fear Most: Home](#)
8. [Volunteers Step in to Keep Asylum Seekers Healthy on Border](#)

[RSVP Now](#)



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**Dates and times for three more award programs on Zoom are as follows (all times in Eastern Time):**

**June 3 at 1:00 p.m.:** The Bob Considine Award for Best newspaper, news service or digital interpretation of international affairs.

- **Isabel Coles** and **Rena Effendi** of The Wall Street Journal, interviewed by **Peter Spiegel**, US managing editor of the Financial Times.

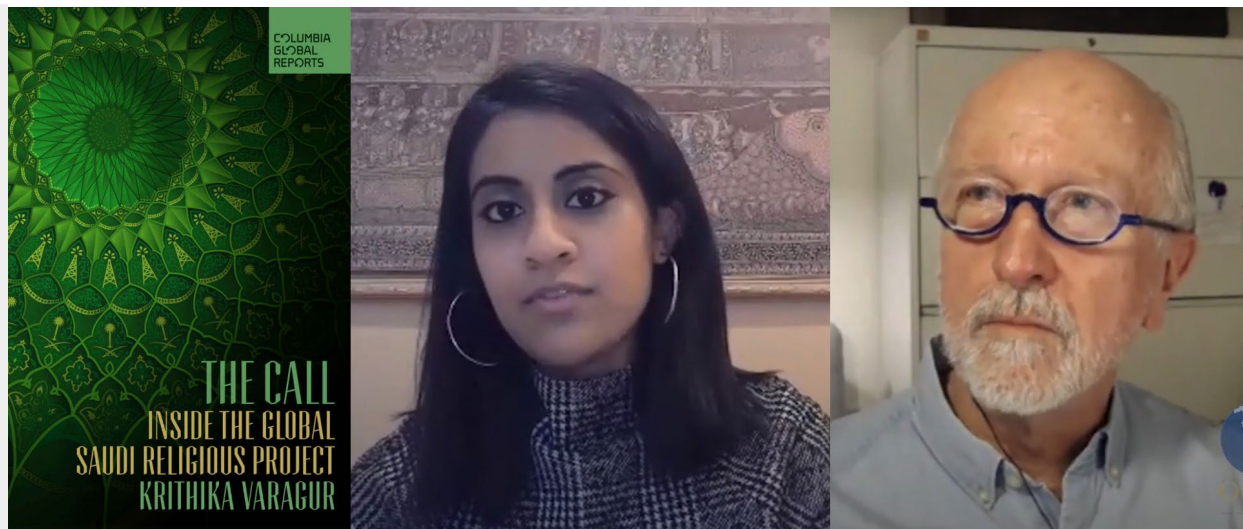
**June 10 at 12:00 p.m.:** Winners of the OPC's three photography awards, interviewed by freelance photographer **Daniella Zalcman**.

- The Robert Capa Gold Medal Award for best photographic reporting from abroad requiring exceptional courage and enterprise. Winner: **Dieu Nalio Chery** of The Associated Press for "Haiti: Nation on the Brink."
- The Olivier Rebbot Award for best photographic news reporting from abroad in any medium. Winner: **Moises Saman** of National Geographic for "El Salvador: A Country in Crisis."
- The Best Feature Photography award for best feature photography on an international theme published in any medium. Winner: **Rena Effendi** of the Wall Street Journal for "He lost a daughter to the Islamic State. Can he save his grandchildren?"

**June 19 at 6:00 p.m.:** The Lowell Thomas Award for best radio, audio, or podcast coverage of international affairs.

- Winners participating in the call include: **Gregory Warner**, **Karen Duffin** and **Sebastian Meyer** of NPR's Rough Translation podcast for "The Search: Parts 1 and 2." **Ann Cooper**, Professor Emerita of the Columbia Journalism School, is the interviewer.

Krithika Varagur Discusses  
'Unstable Byproducts'  
of Global Saudi Influence



by Chad Bouchard

More than four decades ago, Saudi Arabia stepped up its soft-power campaign of influence across the Muslim world and permanently shaped the geopolitical landscape, with the campaign's fruits now taking on a life of their own.

On May 14, journalist Krithika Varagur, OPC member and 2019 Sally Jacobsen Fellowship winner, shared insights and discussed her new book about the Saudi fundamentalist program, titled *The Call: Inside the Global Saudi Religious Project*.

Her reporting spanned hemispheres to Indonesia, Nigeria and Kosovo, three countries touched by Saudi Arabia's dawa, or "call" to Islam. Varagur said Saudi influence stems back to 1938 with the discovery of oil on the Arabian Peninsula, with resources that empowered King Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud in 1965 to envision his kingdom at the political center of the Muslim world.

She said the Saudi influence campaign went into overdrive in 1979 with the "perfect storm" confluence of events that include the Iranian Revolution, which "struck fear into the heart of Saudi" because it was a Shia movement and a popular revolution against a monarchy. That year also brought the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and an attempted revolt by a band of Saudi extremist insurgents who seized the Great Mosque of Mecca and called for the overthrow of the Saudi dynasty.

"That absolutely terrified the kingdom," Varagur said. "This takeover of the Grand Mosque in Mecca was harrowing, and it led to a lot of crackdowns inside the kingdom" and caused the country's state clerics, the Wahhabi ulamas, to desire more of a presence in the daily religious life of Saudis and others beyond the country's borders.

[Read More](#)



## COVID-19 Coverage from OPC Members

OPC member **Kim Hjelmgaard** has been covering COVID-19 for USA Today, with a [piece on May 19](#) about President Donald Trump's threats to cut World Health Organization funding and withdraw U.S. membership. She wrote that he threatened in a letter to quit the global health body if it "does not adopt 'major substantive improvements' within 30 days," and called the WHO a "puppet of China." Hjelmgaard wrote that "little evidence has emerged to substantiate accusations from Trump administration officials that the WHO deliberately acted in concert with China to obfuscate what it knew about the outbreak." She also wrote [on May 18](#) about Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar's blasting of the WHO during its two-day assembly, and [on May 14](#) filed a piece along with colleague David Jackson about Deborah L. Birx, the coronavirus response coordinator frequently seen at White House briefings, and whether her role was diminished due to her corrections of incorrect messages from Trump about the outbreak.

OPC member **Stéphanie Fillion** has been covering COVID-19 news for the United Nations-focused media PassBlue, including a [May 12 story](#) about the agency's search for a new medical director following the departure of Jillann Farmer. The person who serves in that role will decide whether the UN headquarters compound in New York City would be open or closed during the pandemic. "Despite recent infighting among some countries about whether the headquarters should remain physically closed or reopen for meetings of member states on June 1st, her departure does not seem to be political," Fillion reported.

OPC member **Anita Snow** is covering the pandemic for The Associated Press from Arizona, with a piece [on May 15](#) about the reopening of casinos in the state after gaming rooms have been closed for two months during peak outbreaks of the virus. She reported that casinos will have measures in place to reduce risk of exposure, such as lower maximum capacity, visitors "encouraged" to wear masks and being "asked whether they have any symptoms like a fever or dry cough." She wrote that one casino was marketing its reopening with the slogan "reclaim your fun."

***Please send us your personal anecdotes, photos, and links to published pieces related to COVID-19 to [info@opcofamerica.org](mailto:info@opcofamerica.org), and we will publish them on our website and share with members. You can also share those stories directly with members on our [OPC Connect](#) group on Facebook, or***

tweet us [@opcofamerica](#) .

## New Resources for Covering COVID-19

The **Voice of America** is documenting cases on its press freedom page with an interactive map tracking journalists who report being attacked, arrested or restricted, with a project titled [Risk and Reporting At The Pandemic's Front Line](#).

The **Committee to Protect Journalists** has posted a [list of resources](#) for journalists covering the pandemic, including mental health resources, safety advisories, and reports from the field in a Q&A format.

In addition, the CPJ has launched a way to ask COVID-19 questions of committee experts, with one dedicated to [newsrooms](#), and another for [individual journalists](#).

### Surveys

**Storyhunter** is sharing the findings from a survey they've conducted across their members here: ['Freelancers and Production Companies Are Ready To Work, Storyhunter Survey Shows'](#). They have also created this practical [Video Production Guidelines During COVID-19 Outbreak](#).

The **International Center for Journalists and Tow Center** have launched a global [COVID-19 survey](#) to aid recovery. The survey seeks to track and assess the impacts of the pandemic on journalism worldwide, and to help reimagine its future. Please take part and help to publicize.

And a reminder that the **International Women's Media Foundation** [has a survey](#) open through May 25 aimed at understanding online harassment trends and changes during COVID-19. The survey is a collaboration between the IWMF's Online Harassment Advisory Board, in partnership with OnlineSOS, the Arab Foundation for Freedoms and Equality, Code for Africa, the Committee to Protect Journalists, fraycollege (an African journalism and media research organization), Indira Cornelio from #SeguDigital, PEN America, and WanaData.

### More Resources

- The group A Culture of Safety (ACOS) [assembled](#) a substantial list of COVID-19 resources for journalists, including links to practical safety advice, funding opportunities, hardship and emergency funds, and reporting resources such as guides for fact checking.
- ICFJ [launched](#) a page for COVID-19 resources for journalists.
- Rory Peck Trust has a [resource page](#) for pandemic coverage. It includes safety guidelines, funding sources, job opportunities and online training videos.

- The Freelance Audio Fund is [providing](#) emergency relief to the professional audio community impacted by COVID-19.

The OPC has added these links to a special COVID-19 section on the member-only [Resources](#) page available to members who have logged in. Watch that page as we share more. Click the button below to go directly, or find it in your Member Dashboard under "Resources."

**If you have any issues accessing the resources page, please contact Chad Bouchard at [chad@opcofamerica.org](mailto:chad@opcofamerica.org) for credentials.**

[OPC Resources Page](#)

## People by Emily Brown and Chad Bouchard

### SCHOLARS

**Stephen Kalin**, Roy Rowan winner in 2013, has joined The Wall Street Journal as its new Middle East correspondent covering Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries. Recently he was with Reuters, which he joined in 2013 as a trainee. He then became Egypt correspondent and later he was made Iraq correspondent. Most recently, he was Reuters' Saudi chief correspondent. Before joining Reuters, Stephen was a reporter at The Associated Press.

**Rajiv Golla**, 2017 Walter and Betsy Cronkite Scholarship winner, launched the [first three episodes of a podcast](#) on May 15 that he had been working on for the last year and a half. "The Missionary" follows the case of Renee Bach, a missionary who started a malnutrition program in rural Uganda, but is now mired in accusations that she masqueraded as a doctor and is rumored to have killed hundreds of children in her unlicensed clinic. Golla reported on the story with colleagues Halima Gikandi and Malcolm Burnley.

**Kantaro Komiya**, the OPC Foundation's 2020 Stan Swinton Fellowship winner, is one of 78 students [chosen](#) for internships at media organizations through the Dow Jones News Fund. Komiya will receive training for business reporting by Paul Glader, a former Wall Street Journal reporter. "Through newsroom internship experiences at Bloomberg News and other outlets in Asia, together with economics study at DePauw, I've been particularly interested in covering global businesses and economies that are so dynamic and interconnected," Komiya told DePauw University, where he is a senior.

### UPDATES

**Shiho Fukada**, 2018 Feature Photography Award winner, was [named](#) an honoree in the Documentary Short at this year's Webby Awards for "Japan's Arm Length Flats," a short she produced for BBC Worklife with Keith Bedford. The documentary looks into the lives of Japanese young people who live in tiny

apartments in Tokyo.

2018 Whitman Bassow Award winner **Abrahm Lustgarten** of ProPublica was guest on the [Ring of Fire](#) podcast to discuss how climate change is contributing to massive hikes in infectious disease.

## Press Freedom Update

by Emily Brown and Chad Bouchard

China effectively expelled **Chris Buckley**, a longtime foreign correspondent for The New York Times, on May 8 after authorities rejected his request to renew his visa. The Australian native recently spent 76 days in Wuhan reporting on the COVID-19 crisis and has been based in China for the past 24 years. Chinese state media has attacked him personally in recent months for his reporting on the epidemic, which included government secrecy and delays in the fight against the virus, as well as public outrage over the death of whistleblower, Li Wenliang. Press freedom organizations including [Reporters Without Borders](#) (RWB) condemned the move and called for China to stop using visa rejections in retaliation against journalists.

At least **eight Kurdish Iraqi journalists** were [detained](#) after covering a protest about unpaid salaries in Duhok on May 16. Reporters from Speda TV and opposition party-affiliated networks Khabir Radio, Khabir TV, PRS Media, and Gali Kurdistan were all arrested, with four reporters being detained for hours and the other four being held overnight. They were charged under Law 11 regulating the organization of demonstration. “Once again the Kurdish authorities in northern Iraq have used the laws at their convenience to stamp out news coverage that makes the government uncomfortable,” said the Committee to Protect Journalists’ Middle East and North Africa representative, Ignacio Miguel Delgado.

On May 15, South African police [beat Paul Nthoba](#), owner and editor of the weekly Mohokare News, for photographing them while they were on patrol enforcing the COVID-19 lockdown. Nthoba was slapped, kicked, and punched by at least four police officers, who also confiscated his phone. Nthoba was detained for four hours and charged with “obstructing law enforcement under a COVID-19 regulation of the Disaster Management Act of 2002.” “Authorities must do the right thing and immediately drop the charge against Paul Nthoba, who was insulted and gratuitously assaulted by police for simply chronicling them at work,” said Angela Quintal, the CPJ’s Africa program coordinator.



Read more Press Freedom news coverage, including this week’s Press Freedom Update, on the OPC website via the link below.

[Press Freedom News](#)



