

## Myanmar: Brave journalists in prison are awarded the Pulitzer Prize



Credit: Washington Post

**Journalists around the world are continually putting their lives at risk to bring us stories that we need to read. The Pulitzer Prize is awarded for outstanding journalism across many categories, but this year, the prize for International Reporting takes on even more importance as it has been given to two journalists who are in jail in Myanmar.**

**Who are the Prize winners?** Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo are serving seven years in Yangon's Insein Prison for "exposing state secrets". They are a part of Reuters, the global news agency. The men were covering the investigation into the murder of 10 Rohingya men in the village of Inn Dinn. The Rohingya Muslims have been treated atrociously by the military with several thousand fleeing the country as they feared for their lives. The two men had collected a massive amount of evidence from victims of the violence as well as from some of the people who took part in it. Their report was going to be very embarrassing for the government who continues to deny doing anything wrong.

**How were they arrested?** The journalists were arrested in 2017 on the charge that they had 'classified documents in their possession.' They claim that they had been set up. A police officer, pretending to be a source of information, handed them some documents at a secret meeting outside of Yangon. As soon as he had done so, several other police officers came charging into the room and arrested the pair.

Reuter's Editor-in-Chief Stephen J Adler was quoted on the company's website saying, "I'm thrilled that Wa Lone and Kyaw

Soe Oo and their colleagues have been recognised for their extraordinary, courageous coverage.....I remain deeply distressed, however, that our brave reporters Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo are still behind bars.”

The report, called ‘Massacre in Myanmar’ was completed by Reuters’ Simon Lewis and Antoni Slodkowski.

This is not the first time that the plight of the Rohingyas has been highlighted through the Pulitzer Prize. In 2014, another report, on the fate of the Rohingyas, also by Reuters, had won this award. Further, in 2018, the staff of Reuters were given the Feature Photography award for images that exposed the violence that Rohingya refugees faced in fleeing Myanmar.

We salute these bravehearts and hope they win their final appeal in Myanmar’s Supreme Court.

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