

RAPPORT  
MORAL



**JOURNALISM IS THE WATCHDOG WE NEED.**

Despite the hopes born with a new decade, 2021 will ultimately be remembered as the year of a step backwards. In Burma, the putsch led by the Burmese army plunged the country ten years back, prior to the fall of the previous junta in February 2011 and the flourishing of a free press it allowed.

Long considered a bastion of press freedom, Hong Kong has seen unprecedented terror. China took over the island, suffocated Hong Kong's TV, radio, newspapers and news websites, and locked up journalists, putting an end to local democracy in the archipelago.

In Belarus, since the disputed presidential election of August 9, 2020, thousands of people have taken to the streets to peacefully demand an honest and transparent election. Journalists, especially those who have covered these unprecedentedly large demonstrations, have become a prime target of the government, which has no qualms about beating, torturing and locking them up, and has even hijacked an airplane to silence a journalist.

The consequences of the Taliban takeover on the media landscape in Afghanistan have been similarly impressive: disappearance of media outlets, flight of journalists, especially women, threatened with death by the new regime.

These systematic and repeated attacks during the attempts to subjugate peoples are proof, if proof were needed, of the importance journalism represents. Journalism is

the watchdog we need and I am proud to chair an organization that defends it with strength and determination every day.

### **AT THE HEART OF GLOBAL ISSUES.**

Faced with this grim picture, the Reporters Without Borders teams have worked tirelessly to provide appropriate solutions. They have deployed considerable energy and have shown remarkable effectiveness, as evidenced by the activity report presented by its Director General, Christophe Deloire. RSF is at the heart of the global challenges facing journalism and interacts daily with these heroic men and women who take risks to inform us.

In this regard, the awarding of the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize to two journalists is wonderful news, as it brings international recognition to a rationale that RSF has been developing for several years. Yes, journalism contributes to peace by helping to uncover the truth and discover reality. Yes, journalists are often the first victims in polarized societies, where civil discord is the norm.

The winners, Maria Ressa of the Philippines, co-founder of the news website Rappler, and Dmitri Muratov of Russia, editor-in-chief of Moscow's Novaya Gazeta, where Anna Politovskaya, the investigative journalist murdered 15 years ago, worked, are both friends of the organization. I met Maria Ressa, whose work and struggle I have been following for years in the face of a hostile and virulent government, and she embodies better than anyone else the values of a demanding and fearless journalism.

RSF stands by her and Maria stands by RSF, being one of the members of the Commission on Information and Democracy created by RSF to establish democratic guarantees in the digital space. Novaya Gazeta is one of the last independent Russian media, defended by RSF and one of the first beneficiaries of the JX Fund, the European fund for journalism in exile, launched in April 2022.

### **AN ORGANIZATION ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL.**

In this constantly evolving context, RSF is developing new modes of action, and has committed itself to a logic of priority campaigns that allows the organization to mobilize in a transversal manner with a precise and shared goal to reinforce the impact of the actions carried out. This innovation in RSF's modus operandi has made it possible to achieve the major changes expected by RSF, and is transforming the organization, which is now able to be proactive and innovative in the long-term

solutions it provides, and to be able to react quickly to crises by pooling the skills, expertise, and resources.

I would therefore like to thank all those who "make" RSF, whether they are staffers, correspondents, members or donors. The RSF community is founded on values and commitment that are constantly reaffirmed by the team. What RSF has been able to accomplish in support of Afghan journalists (with more than 900 of them welcomed in Europe thanks to our action) or Ukrainian journalists (with more than 400 bullet-proof vests sent to Lviv and then Kyiv in a few weeks) shows the power of commitment.

At this key moment in the life of the association, the General Assembly, I have a special thought for Michèle Léridon, who was a long time board member of RSF, and Rubina Mohring, founder of the Austrian section of RSF, who left us respectively in September 2021 and March 2022. These talented women embodied two of RSF's fundamental values: tenacity and audacity. May their example inspire us!

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**Pierre Haski, Président**