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Peruvian journalist to receive international reporting award at WKU

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Apr 16, 2024



Manuel Calloquispe

Submitted

Journalist Manuel Calloquispe's work in his hometown of Puerto Maldonado, Peru, has made him the target of angry gold miners and profiteers of the Amazonian rainforest's destruction.

His risky reporting earned him the seventh Fleischaker/Greene Award for Courageous International Reporting this year.

Calloquispe will travel to Western Kentucky University this month to accept the award from the School of Media & Communication. He will speak April 23 at 6 p.m. in Gary Ransdell Hall in a free public event.

“In the Madre de Dios region of Peru, the epicenter of violent, political, protests and illegal gold mining, one journalist dares to report the truth: Manuel Calloquispe,” award co-founder Kim Greene stated in a release. “We tremendously admire Manuel’s persistent coverage in the face of frequent threats on his life. His dedication to bringing truthful information to Peruvians is unparalleled.”

Calloquispe reports for the El Comercio newspaper and broadcaster Latina TV. In January, his home was surrounded by over 200 protesters who threatened and insulted him, according to the nonprofit Committee to Protect Journalists.

He told CPJ in February he believed the threats stemmed from his coverage of protests after the impeachment and arrest of President Pedro Castillo, as well as reporting that alleged illegal miners helped finance the demonstrations.

“They want me to stop reporting on the protests. That’s why they attacked me,” Calloquispe told the CPJ then.

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John Otis, a Columbia-based consultant for the CPK, stated Calloquispe willingly puts himself in harm’s way to shed light on Amazonian deforestation and illegal operations in the region.

“He’s pretty exposed to all the dangers,” Otis stated in a release. “It’s almost always the journalists that are out in the sticks that are the most vulnerable.”

Louisville attorneys Jon Fleischaker and Kim Greene founded the Fleischaker/Greene Fund for Excellence in First Amendment Issues at Western Kentucky University in 2008.

It recognizes one journalist each year who often reports under dangerous circumstances to protect free speech and leads efforts to highlight underreported populations.

The fund also supports WKU's Fleischaker/Greene Scholars Program, which offers School of Media & Communication students opportunities to take classes in specialized topics and invites nationally recognized speakers to WKU.

Past recipients include Colombian journalist Lineth Bedoya Lima in 2016, Afghan journalist Lotfullah Najafizada in 2017, Mexican journalist Marcela Turati in 2018, Finnish journalist Jessikka Aro in 2019, American journalist Carol Guzy in 2023 and Ukrainian journalist Olga Rudenko and the staff of the Kyiv Independent in 2023.

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