Blog



From left, top row: Lviv, Ukraine (Gregg Brekke); Perechyn, Ukraine (Courtesy of Sisters of the Order of St. Basil the Great); Kiwanja, Rutshuru, Democratic Republic of Congo (Stephano Kambale).
Middle row: Vukovar, Croatia (GSR Photo/Chris Herlinger); Myanmar (Courtesy of Sister Florence); South Sudan (Courtesy of Scholasticah Nganda).
Bottom row: Port-au-Prince, Haiti (OSV News/Reuters/Ralph Tedy Erol); Makeni, Sierra Leone (GSR photo/Doreen Ajiambo); Negombo, Sri Lanka (Thomas Scaria).

by GSR Staff

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Global Sisters Report's series "Hope Amid Turmoil: Sisters in Conflict Areas" has been awarded highest honors in the Religion Communicators Council's 2024 DeRose-Hinkhouse Memorial Awards.

Contributions to the series by Chris Herlinger, GSR's international correspondent, won Best in Class in the "Periodicals" category during the council's recent convention, held April 4-6 in Louisville, Kentucky. Herlinger's work for the series was also named category winner for the "Articles and Stories — Series" category. The annual awards are for work done in the previous year.

In addition, Herlinger was honored for other work, an October 2023 article on the Metropolitan Opera premiere of the opera "Dead Man Walking," which focuses on the ministry of Sr. Helen Prejean. That article was named winner in the category "Newspaper: Article or Story — Single Work."

"Hope Amid Turmoil: Sisters in Conflict Areas" was a yearlong 2023 series of 40-plus stories and columns developed by GSR journalists, columnists and editors to examine the work and ministries of Catholic sisters in areas riven by conflict.

A special focus by Herlinger, who was a lead writer for the series and who was honored by the Religion Communicators Council for five stories in the series, was reporting from Ukraine. But he also focused on other areas, including the former Yugoslavia and the long-standing humanitarian situation in Haiti.

Herlinger reported from Ukraine, Croatia and Bosnia; he has reported from Haiti numerous times in his career but the security situation in Haiti was deemed too unsafe for on-the-ground reporting there.

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"The author makes clear both the tragedy and the hope of people living with war," one judge said of the "Hope Amid Turmoil" series. "The events and effects on the people are well-presented, both factually and emotionally, with first-person accounts and an on-the-ground understanding of the political and social realities. This is powerful non-fiction."

Another judge said: "This series is outstanding. The writing incorporates all of the 'dos' for journalists: make it personal; make it sensory; make it relatable; make it compelling."

The DeRose-Hinkhouse Memorial Awards are named to honor the late Victor DeRose and the late Paul M. Hinkhouse, leading lithographers in New York and longtime friends of the Religion Communicators Council. The council is an association of faith-based journalists and communications professionals.

GSR longlisted for global award

In its nearly 10 years of existence, Global Sisters Report has won many national awards. Now, it could be the winner of a global award, as well.

A story by Doreen Ajiambo, GSR's Africa/Middle East correspondent, has been longlisted in the One World Media Awards.

Ajiambo's 2023 story, "Sisters foster healing for survivors and perpetrators of Sierra Leone's civil war," was also part of GSR's yearlong series, "Hope Amid Turmoil: Sisters in Conflict Areas."



Screenshot of Doreen Ajiambo's story "Sisters foster healing for survivors and perpetrators of Sierra Leone's civil war" (GSR screenshot)

The story highlights both survivors and perpetrators who have benefited from religious sisters and other organizations fostering healing and reconciliation in Sierra Leone since the 11-year-long civil war was officially declared over in 2002.

Ajiambo's story was one of 540 entries from 117 countries vying for the award, and is among 10 publications included in the longlist print category, including international publications such as The Guardian, Reuters and The Economist. The finalists will be named May 8.

The longlisted entries are available to view on One World Media's website. The awards ceremony will take place June 19 at Curzon Soho, London, and will be livestreamed.