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**Maria Ressa's Legal Team Welcome Nobel Peace Prize 2021 announcement and call on the Philippines to drop all remaining cases against her**

On behalf of the international legal team representing award-winning journalist Maria Ressa, Amal Clooney and Caoilfhionn Gallagher QC welcomed the news that the Norwegian Nobel Committee has awarded the [2021 Nobel Peace Prize](#) to Maria Ressa and Dmitry Muratov for “*their efforts to safeguard freedom of expression, which is a precondition for democracy and lasting peace*” and “*their courageous fight for freedom of expression in the Philippines and Russia.*”

This is the first time a Filipino national has ever won the Prize, and the Committee highlighted the importance of Ms Ressa's work, stating:

*“Maria Ressa uses freedom of expression to expose abuse of power, use of violence and growing authoritarianism in her native country, the Philippines. In 2012, she co-founded Rappler, a digital media company for investigative journalism, which she still heads. As a journalist and the Rappler's CEO, Ressa has shown herself to be a fearless defender of freedom of expression. Rappler has focused critical attention on the Duterte regime's controversial, murderous anti-drug campaign. The number of deaths is so high that the campaign resembles a war waged against the country's own population. Ms Ressa and Rappler have also documented how social media is being used to spread fake news, harass opponents and manipulate public discourse.”*

Ms Clooney and Ms Gallagher QC, on behalf of Ms Ressa's international legal team, today reiterated their call for the Philippines to immediately drop all the outstanding cases against Ms Ressa and Rappler. Ms Ressa and Rappler face a barrage of criminal and civil proceedings launched in response to their public interest journalism, including [a sentence of up to 6 years for libel](#) that is currently on appeal. These prosecutions expose Ms Ressa to a lifetime behind bars and have provoked international condemnation, including from the [US](#), the UK, Canada, the [UN](#), the [EU](#) and the [Media Freedom Coalition of States](#).

Responding to the Nobel Peace Prize 2021 award, **Ms Clooney** said:

*“I am so proud of my client and my friend Maria Ressa. She has sacrificed her own freedom for the rights of journalists all over the world and I am grateful to the Nobel Committee for shining a light on her incredible courage. I hope the Philippine authorities will now stop persecuting her and other journalists and that this prize helps to protect the press around the world.”*

**Ms Gallagher QC** said:

*“Independent, investigative journalism in the Philippines is an act of bravery. At least 19 journalists have been killed since President Duterte assumed office in 2016. Our courageous client Maria Ressa has been convicted on baseless charges, faces decades behind bars, and receives daily threats of violence and rape simply for doing her job – for being a journalist. Today, the Nobel Committee has honoured her courage. Now, the Philippines must drop all cases against Ms Ressa. And the world must hold the Philippines to account if it fails to do so.”*

**Ms Ressa** said:

*“I am honoured that the Norwegian Nobel Committee has honoured me and my fellow journalist Dmitry Muratov in this way. The relentless campaign of harassment and intimidation against me in the Philippines is a stark example of a global trend: journalists and freedom of the press facing increasingly adverse conditions. I hope today’s Nobel Peace Prize 2021 award will remind the authorities in the Philippines, Russia and around the world of the need to respect journalists and journalism. Independent journalism holding power to account has never been so important.”*

The international legal team reiterates its call for all outstanding cases against Ms Ressa and Rappler to be dropped immediately.

Ms Clooney and Ms Gallagher QC lead the international counsel team acting for Ms Ressa, working with fellow barristers Can Yeginsu and Claire Overman. The team is also working closely with Peter Lichtenbaum, Stephen Rademaker, Rani Gupta and Lisa Peets of Covington & Burling LLP, as well as Ms Ressa’s counsel team in Manila.