

*Joanna Chiu's speech:*

Thank you to all of you for being here today to support CJFE and thank you CJFE for your incredible work.

I know all too well having lived in China that free speech is something we must defend and cannot take for granted.

I've seen what it's like for an entire population to have virtually no rights to free speech in a very basic sense, let alone the right of journalists to report without fear of persecution.

Last year, as has been the case for a long time, China was a top jailer of journalists. This includes my friend Sophia Huang. Her work kickstarted China's Me Too movement, and she's now facing years behind bars for "trying to subvert state power."

At the same time, women journalists in China have additional pressures. I began my journalism career overseas and eventually considered it normal to face pretty much constant sexual harassment and racism.

One of my last stories from China was about this unspoken culture where the demeaning of Asian women in particular, including by foreign men living abroad, is normalized in professional settings.

This goes to explain why, 5 years ago, a group of us in Beijing started NüVoices as a community to change the status quo. We were women of all ages at different stages of our careers. Some of us were moms who faced challenges such as being fired for getting pregnant.

We were sick of hearing excuses for why talented women weren't getting the respect they deserved. Our directory of female China experts went viral and is still used by global event organizers and newsrooms.

A network of volunteers opened one international chapter after another. Some of our most active members and Patreon supporters are men who believe in a more equitable professional environment for women and BIPOC experts on China.

We celebrate the work of our colleagues through events, magazine and podcast. Next month we're launching a chapter in Toronto. Thank you all who've made NüVoices the vibrant global community it is today and thank you Coalition for Women in Journalism for awarding us with this honour.

While our group's focus is on China, the CFWIJ's mission is so important Internationally. Sadly, all around the world, including here in Canada, being female, non binary or transgender as a journalist means you're more likely to be targeted for harassment and violence.

I'm humbled to be a co-winner with Zahra Nader. Thank you for Zahra your work championing the brave contributions of women journalists on Afghanistan.

Kathy Gannon. Thank you for setting some of the highest standards that all journalists should aspire to. It's such an honour to receive this award in your name and to also get some great advice and encouragement from you today, at a point where many journalists feel unsure about the future of industry.

I also want to thank my publisher House of Anansi. And my amazing colleagues at the Toronto Star. Some are here today.

These last few years back in Canada have been the first time in my life that I received nothing but support from every single editor I encountered, starting with Angela Mullins who is here today. I was able to report in Taiwan and write on issues important to and which centre the stories of Canadian immigrants.

Our industry is facing many unknowns... but I can't tell you how inspiring it is tonight to be surrounded by such excellent hardworking journalists and the people who support our work.

I think we should all feel hopeful about the future of media, because it's clear that none of us are giving up on speaking truth to power.

Thank you!