

The Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism



Theme: WSCIJ@20: Investigative Reporting and the Future of Truth

Tuesday 9 December 2025 | 4:00pm - 8:00pm (WAT)

📍 MUSON Centre, Onikan, Lagos

#WSAIR2025

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www.wscij.org 



Order of events

Welcome protocol/National anthem - Nifemi Oguntoye & Ini-John Mekwa, Comperes

Introduction of guests – Comperes

Opening remarks – Dapo Olorunyomi, Founder, WSCIJ

Partner’s remarks - Michel Deelen - Consul General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Lagos

Judges’ comments - Abigail Ogwezyy-Ndisika – Chair, 2025 Judges Board

Presentation of awards – Television, Online, Radio, Print, Photo, Editorial Cartoon

Honorary awards - Lifetime Award for Journalistic Excellence & Human Rights Defender Award

Beyond 20 years: WSCIJ’s path into the future - Motunrayo Alaka, Executive Director, WSCIJ

Remarks - Wole Soyinka - Grand Patron, WSCIJ

Appreciation - Laura Ede, Associate Director, Programmes, WSCIJ

Welcome Speech

Celebrating 20 years of courage, impact, and preparing for the journey ahead for investigative journalism

It is my honour to welcome you to a historic moment: the 20th Wole Soyinka Award for Investigative Reporting, celebrated alongside the 20th anniversary of the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism. This double milestone is more than a celebration. It is a testimony to resilience, to purpose, and to our unshakeable belief that journalism can defend democracy and protect civic freedom.

Twenty years ago, we began with a conviction that Nigeria deserved a press strong enough to support its return to democracy after a protracted 29-year military rule. We believed that investigative reporting would strengthen our society as much as it would improve our news media through its mechanisms for accountability. Two decades later, we stand on the evidence of that conviction. Courage has multiplied. Truth-telling has persisted. The stories that matter have continued to rise to the surface despite daunting disruptions, from technological shifts, climate pressures, COVID-19, economic instability, and fundamental attacks on democracy around the world.

As we mark this moment, I pause to acknowledge and appreciate our founder, Mr. Dapo Olorunyomi. His courage, integrity, and vision laid the foundation upon which this Centre stands. I also recognise Professor Ropo Sekoni, our Board member since inception and Board Chair for more than 15 years, whose wisdom and steady leadership have strengthened our institution. These are the people in whom Professor Wole Soyinka placed confidence when he entrusted his name to this initiative. Their collective faith in the transformative power of journalism continues to guide our mission. We honour them today and always.

Tonight is especially meaningful to me. I was there at the maiden edition of this award as a young programme volunteer, learning, leading, supporting, witnessing and co-writing history. Standing here now, leading the celebration of our 20th anniversary, is both humbling and exciting. It reminds me that institutions grow because people commit, stay the course, and believe in what they are building. I am grateful to have been part of this journey from the beginning.

Over the last two decades, WSCIJ has broadened its reach and deepened its impact. We have trained more than 10,000 journalists, engaged over 180 media organisations, and supported or facilitated more than 2,000 accountability and investigative reports. These numbers are not statistics. They are stories of journalists who found courage, citizens whose lives were improved, and communities that found justice. To all our partners who have walked with us through seasons of challenge, growth, and bold experimentation, we say thank you. Your support has been wind for our sails. Since 2005, our mission has remained clear: expose corruption, confront regulatory failures, defend human rights, reward excellence, mentor emerging talent, strengthen journalism at the grassroots, support media independence, and safeguard the civic space that allows truth to flourish.

Tonight, we celebrate remarkable finalists whose commitment to public interest journalism has brought them here. Winners will emerge, but all of them already embody the integrity and excellence represented by our Lifetime and Honorary Award recipients. As we look to the next 20 years, we understand that the journey may be long and we recommit to empowering journalists, defending civic space, strengthening newsrooms, innovating responsibly, and ensuring that accountability journalism thrives. Thank you for standing with us. Thank you for standing with truth.

Motunrayo Alaka,
Executive Director/CEO
Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism



Award finalists



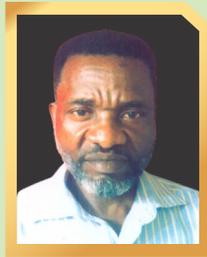
Kunle Adebajo



Theophilus Adedokun



Victor Asowata



Chukwuemeka Emenike



Ann Godwin



Afeez Hanafi



Isah Ismaila



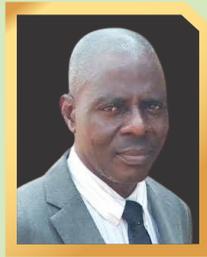
Kingsley Jeremiah



Ugonma Ogbu-matthias



Julius Osahon



Monday Osayende



Elliot Ovadje



Tina Todo



Muslim Yusuf

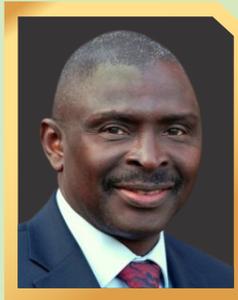


Judges



Abigail Ogwezzy-Ndisika

Director, Institute of Continuing Education, (ICE), University of Lagos



Dayo Aiyetan

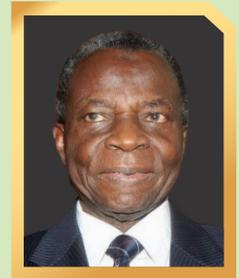
Executive Director International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR)



Stella Din-Jacob

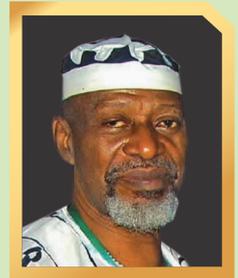
Nigerian media executive, Director, Mustel Creative Works LTD

Honorary award recipient



Justice Ayo Salami

Former President, Court of Appeal



Odia-Ofeimun

Poet, Political Scientist

Screening committee



Dr. Theophilus Abbah

Programme Director Daily Trust Foundation



Akintunde Akinleye

PhD Anthropology Carleton University, Ottawa



Stella Iyaji

Editor, Daily Trust Newspaper



Dr. Olatunji Ololade

Associate Editor The Nation Newspaper



Tessy Igomu

Deputy Editor PUNCH Weekend Titles



Ajibola Amzat

Africa Editor Centre for Collaborative Investigative Journalism

About the Award and WSCIJ

The Wole Soyinka Award for Investigative Reporting, initially called the Wole Soyinka Investigative Reporting Award, honours journalists who do investigative reports from the print, radio, television, photo, cartoon and online categories. In addition to the main categories, the award recognised and honoured reports on climate change, local government, girls and women (Report Women), and sports in the past. It produced 119 finalists, 61 Soyinka Laureates, 13 investigative journalists of the year and 29 honorary awards recipients. The honorary recognitions are the Lifetime Award for Journalistic Excellence and the Anti-Corruption/Human Rights Defender Awards.

The Award was first held in October 2005 to aid the development of an investigative reporting culture in the Nigerian media. The award presentation event has held annually on the International Anti-Corruption Day, December 9 since 2009. In naming the award after Wole Soyinka, we hope to enable good governance and social justice and bring further attention to Soyinka's untiring and relentless support for the cause of freedom of expression and other human rights.

Headquartered in Lagos, Nigeria, the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ) is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation that uses the mechanism of investigative reporting as a tool for accountable democracy, good governance and social justice.

Some journalists targeted in line of duty #JournalismIsNotACrime #CivicSpaceGuard

Journalists across Nigeria face arrests, harassment, attacks, legal intimidation, and other violations. Below are some cases in 2024:



Azeez Adisa-Jaji

Informant247

Charged with cybercrime and defamation after reporting on a fraud investigation on Monday 5 February.



Kasarachi Aniagolu

The Whistler Newspaper

Unlawfully detained by the Anti-Violence Crime Unit of the Nigerian Police Force on Thursday 22 February while covering a police raid on Bureau de Change operators. Assaulted, threatened, and had her journalistic equipment confiscated. Detained alongside 95 forex traders.



Saliyu Ayatullahi

Informant247

Charged with cybercrime and defamation after publishing an investigative report to expose corruption at Kwara State Polytechnic on Monday 5 February.



Idibia Gabriel

Freelance Journalist, Kaduna

Brutalised by Nigerian police officers on Tuesday 11 June for taking pictures of them transporting seized cattle. Suffered eye injuries as a result of the alleged torture



Daniel Ojukwu

Foundation for Investigative Journalism (FIJ)

On Wednesday 1 May, he was arrested and detained for nine days based on a petition accusing him of violating the Cybercrimes Act for a story he authored.



Olukayode Jayiode

The Punch Newspaper

Attacked by police officers while covering the #EndBadGovernance protest on Friday 2 August in Abuja. His camera, phones, and other personal belongings were seized by the police.



Jide Oyekunle

Daily Independent Newspapers

Taken away by a police officer for covering the #EndBadGovernance protest in Abuja on Thursday 1 August.



Adejuwon Soyinka

The Conversation Africa

Detained and interrogated for about 8 hours by the State Security Service (SSS) upon arrival at Murtala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos on 25 August. The SSS' first explanation for the arrest was that his name was placed on its watchlist on the request of an unnamed government agency. It later blamed the entire saga on a possible mistaken identity.



Abdurashed Hammad

Freelance Journalist

On Thursday 15 August, received a phone call from a Department of State Services (DSS) official in Sokoto State, who stated the invitation was connected to an investigative story published by TheCable.



Fisayo Soyombo

Foundation for Investigative Journalism (FIJ)

Detained and held incommunicado for three days by the 6th Amphibious Division of the Nigerian Army in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, on Thursday 28 November.

Investigative reporting is the vital force for the restoration of human dignity. – Wole Soyinka