

## News24 journalists take top honours in 2024 Vodacom Journalist of the Year Awards

The title of 2024 Vodacom Journalist of the Year - and R100 000 in prize money – is News24's Kyle Cowan. Joel Ontong, also of News24 is the 2024 Young Journalist of the Year Award.



Last night, Thursday 8 November, the national winners of the 2024 Vodacom Journalist of the Year Awards' (VJOY) were honoured at a ceremony in Johannesburg (Image supplied)

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Cowan won for *The Murray Murders*, a body of work about the double murder of liquidators, which also won the Investigative category.

The judges said his article had "skilfully pieced together information that helped to identify perpetrators and the reasons behind the murder".

Ontong's title award allows him to enrol in a course of his choice, to the value of R50,000 to improve his skills and career prospects in journalism.

### Lifetime Award

The VJOY Lifetime Achiever Award for 2024 was bestowed posthumously upon Jermaine Craig, the former *Cape Argus* editor and media manager for the 2010 World Cup who died last year.

"As an award-winning journalist, he pushed the boundaries and tackled issues that people were not brave enough to discuss publicly, and as an editor he mentored his staff, helping them produce ground-breaking work," says judging panel convenor Ryland Fisher.



MEDIA

Media24 starts transition to a fully digital media company

31 Oct 2024

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## National winners

The national category winners, winning R10,000, were:

- **Opinion**

Winner: *News24's* Carlos Amato for *Ballot dancers: Cartoons on the 2024 elections*

The judges said: "Amato showed innovation in creatively expressing his views about South Africa's march towards the 2024 general elections."

The judges' commendations:

Anathi Madubela from *Mail & Guardian* for *The vulnerable experience of childbirth during war*.

Luke Feltham from *Mail & Guardian* for *Friends of Jacob Zuma*

Marvin Charles from *News24* for *Flames of fear or unity's beacon? DA ups its 'swart gevaar' tactics*

Tamsin Meterlerkamp from *Daily Maverick* for *Cold reality – many of us are closer to living on the street than we think*.

- **Features**

Winner: *Netwerk24's* Willemien Brümmer for a series on neurodiversity.

The judges said: Combining sensitive case histories with topical and educational reporting in a superbly crafted series on neurodiversity, Brümmer puts a face to often-misunderstood medical issues that may lead to mental-health challenges.

Judges' commendations:

Sakhiseni Nxumalo from *Sunday Times* for *Those guys don't play around': The brothers accused of killing AKA*.

Charné Kemp from *Vrye Weekblad* for *'n Skans teen die angs*.

Claire Bisseker from *Financial Mail* for *Lost Boys: inside SA's new education crisis*.

Michelle Banda from *Daily Maverick* for *Father's rights — the complex web many are forced to navigate to access their children*.

Sebe Buthelezi with contributors Tshidiso Lechuba and Tshepo Dhlamini from *NCA Checkpoint* for *Teen mothers speak*.

- **Lifestyle**

Winner: *Daily Dispatch's* Zamandulo Malonde for *Francine Zana: from cleaner to entrepreneur*.

Judges said: Malonde's story about a hotel cleaner who made a bold career move to become a leader in the hospitality industry, showcases optimism, resilience and determination.

Judges' commendations:

Ronald Masinda with contributor Sibabalwe Mdena from *eNCA* for *Evil spirits haunt school children*.

Thinus Ferreira from *News24* for *Chaotic, sweaty, stressful and exhausting: An honest review of my time aboard the MSC Splendida*.



MEDIA

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## • Sport

Winner: *Weg! Platteland's* Willem Van der Berg for *Geloof, hoop en Vanwyksvlei United - Faith, Hope and Vanwyksvlei United*.

The Judges said: "Van der Berg demonstrated the mark of a good journalist by going beyond the call of duty, being meticulous in the gathering, processing and presenting of this piece. It is a story that, under normal circumstances, would probably not see the light of day, but makes riveting reading. This incredible piece gives hope to an almost forgotten part of our land."

Judges' commendations:

Pimani Baloyi with contributor Hulisani Livhebe from *SABC News* for *What appears to be a violent sport, in turn fosters cohesion and tolerance*.

Sellwane Khakhau with contributor Tumelo Setlhabetsi from *SABC News* for *Paralympians NW - the inspirational story of two para-athletes who are the epitome of success against all odds*.

## • Financial and Economics

Winner: *AmaBhungane's* Susan Comrie for *The gas oligarchs*.

The judges said: Comrie's detailed probe into an energy deal with the potential to be an international embarrassment and scandal makes her a worthy national winner.

## • Politics

Winner: *City Press's* Norman Masungwini for *R38 million for shack call centre*.

Judges said: "Masungwini's jaw-dropping piece about massive corruption in the Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District Municipality was skilfully and creatively written. It laid bare the rot of corruption, looting and mismanagement in this poor, rural area."

Judges' commendations:

Nick Dall from *Financial Mail* for *Pofadder's Queen of Copper*.

Lee Rondganger from *IOL* for body of work *How two high-flying Durban bankers ran a R180m Pon scheme targeting pensioners*.

Lisa Steyn from *Financial Mail* for *SA's dodgy diesel*.



MEDIA

South African journalists honoured in SADC Media Awards for excellence in photojournalism a radio

21 Aug 2024

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## • Sustainability

Winner: *Daily Maverick's* Victoria O'Regan with contributor Kristin Engel from *Daily Maverick* for *Taking stock – staggering scale of Western Cape wildfires as fire season continues to rage*.

The judges said: O'Regan delivered excellent environmental journalism, combining comprehensive reporting and compelling style to tell the story of the staggering scale of Western Cape wildfires.”

Judges' commendations:

Lucas Ledwaba from *Mukurukuru Media* for *Changing times and irregular weather patterns worry marula beer brewers*.

Ntsikelelo Qoyo from *The Herald* for *Bay rivers pose health threat*.

Liezl Human with contributor Ashraf Hendricks from *GroundUp* for *Copper boom sparks conflict between mine and residents of Northern Cape*.

Claire Keeton from *The Sunday Times* for *The good, the bad and the ugly: A tale of rural rubbish dumps*.

Julia Evans from *Daily Maverick* for *Rapid water lettuce spread*.

## • Live reporting/ breaking news

Winner: *IOL's* Robin-Lee Francke for *Joshlin Smith*.

The judges said: “We were looking for the proverbial ‘show-stopping’ article that rallied the nation behind a cause. Francke’s piece stood out among the many that had been written about the disappearance of children in this area. She braved the dangers of a gang-infested area in an effort to solve the mystery of a missing child and wrote an incisive and deeply touching piece on Joshlin Smith

## • Photography

Winner: *Cape Times* Ayanda Ndamane for *Pro-Palestine and Pro-Israel supporters clashed with*

*Police.*

The judges said: “Ndamane’s three expertly captured images successfully fulfilled the core responsibility of photojournalism: to tell the story with integrity and objectivity. He captured the intensity of the news event and demonstrate his courage and proximity to the action. The work showcases the fundamental role of press photographers in presenting a balanced and accurate representation of events, unencumbered by bias or prejudice.”

Judges’ commendations:

Armand Hough from Independent Media for *Taxi Strike*.

Betram Malgas from *News24* for *Springboks demolish Romania in Bordeaux try-fest*.



MEDIA

Kenyan journalist Rukia Bulle wins BBC's Komla Dumor Award

15 Aug 2024

## • Innovation in journalism

Winner: *News24*'s Sharlene Rood with contributor Kyle Cowan for *The Murray Murders: Unravelling the assassination of Cloete and Thomas Murray*.

The judges said: This winning entry broke barriers by combining innovative interactive reporting methods with enterprising and meticulous evidence-collecting and riveting storytelling.

Judges’ commendations:

Storm Simpson with contributors Joel Ontong, Na'ilah Ebrahim and Hanlie Gouws from *News24* for *Elections 2024: News24 debunks disinformation and fact-checks misinformation*.

Zandile Khumalo with contributors Lesley Piet, Kgotso Modise, Laila Majiet, Thabiso Nkosi and Morapedi Mashashe from *The Daily Sun* for *Trapped: The struggle to break free from Gomora's cycle of poverty*.

## Role of the media

This year’s competition saw more than 1,200 entries across 12 categories for the judging panel convened by Fisher to consider.

The panel consisted of respected industry experts Arthur Goldstuck, Collin Nxumalo, Dr Elna Rossouw, Professor Gilbert Motsaathebe, Jovial Rantao, Manelisi Dubase, Neo Ntsoma, Obed Zilwa, Patricia McCracken, Portia Kobue, and Advocate Robin Selwal.



MEDIA FREEDOM

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Takalani Netshitenzhe, director of external affairs for Vodacom South Africa, says this year's Awards mark a significant milestone for the network operator, which celebrated 30 years of operation in South Africa.

"As we switched on our network, our nation had just held its first democratic elections and was taking its first baby steps into a future filled with hope and promise.

"The role played by the media during this transformative period was essential, and today journalists remain the watchdogs of our democracy, holding power to account and ensuring that the voices of all South Africans are heard.

"Through journalists' tireless efforts to keep political power accountable through investigative reporting into corruption, we have seen our democracy mature and grow.

"Vodacom realises that supporting journalism is imperative for safeguarding the foundations of our democracy, and is committed to helping to create an environment where quality journalism is celebrated," says Netshitenzhe.

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