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Slain French Photographer Camille Lepage To Receive Manuel Rivera-Ortiz Foundation Prize

Arles, FRANCE, 10 JULY 2014 — French photographer Camille Lepage, killed last May at age 26 in the Central African Republic, will receive the first *Manuel Rivera-Ortiz Foundation Prize*. The ceremony will be held on Friday, 11 July in Arles during the opening week of the 45th edition of the Rencontres d'Arles photography festival. Hervé Schiavetti, Mayor of Arles, will present the Prize to Camille's mother, Maryvonne Lepage, at Galerie Huit Arles in honor of her daughter.

Embedded with Christian anti-Balaka fighters for over 7 months, Lepage had submitted a proposal in the 2014 MRO Foundation Photography Grant competition to document the reasons and deeper consequences of the conflict. Her stated goal in the proposal was "to go beyond the cliché, the usual equation: Africa = Violence." She never learned that her submission had been selected as a finalist.

"Camille was a courageous and daring young woman," said Manuel Rivera-Ortiz, President and Founder of the Foundation. "An inspiration to us all, her tragic death is yet another reminder of life in reportage in the world's most dangerous places."

On May 11, the body of this promising young photojournalist was discovered inside a car driven by members of the anti-Balaka militia in the Central African Republic town of Bouar. Her murder, making headlines globally, came to signify the selfless acts and harrowing danger that journalists and photojournalists take to uncover a story. Displayed on the covers of international newspapers, Lepage's life and work demonstrated that even a young and charismatic rising star was no match for the horrors of journalism in these times.

"I am present to testify for her," says Maryvonne Lepage. "I am here now in full for other young photojournalists who also take risks pursuing their commitment towards peoples' suffering. I owe it and you also."

In a year of firsts for the Foundation, soon after learning of Lepage's murder, news was received that two other MRO Foundation grant nominees had been seriously injured. Another young female photographer had been terribly hurt in an automobile accident and a photographer in Afghanistan was injured during an attempted assassination of Afghan presidential candidate Abdullah Abdullah.

"It will be a great honor to be present to receive this award on Camille's behalf," said Mrs. Lepage. "We are all very touched."

The Manuel Rivera-Ortiz Foundation for Documentary Photography & Film is a non-profit organization committed to positive social discourse in underrepresented communities throughout the world. For additional information on the Foundation, please visit www.mrofoundation.org.

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Visuals on request

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