

Qaanitah Hunter wins Nat Nakasa Award for brave and courageous journalism

Sunday Times journalist Qaanitah Hunter has won the prestigious Nat Nakasa Award for brave and courageous journalism.



Qaanitah Hunter receives the 2019 Nat Nakasa Award for Courageous Journalism - image: Sanef.

Hunter was commended by the judges for openly speaking about depression and anxiety that affects journalists. She said it was important to acknowledge the effects that attacks and social media bullying had on journalists.

“ Yes, we are brave and we write these stories, but that shouldn't stop us from acknowledging the effect it has on our mental health. It is not often spoken about. People think journalists are machines when reporting on difficult stories. The effect that it has on us is important to discuss. ”

Hunter has covered high-profile stories involving politicians and the Gupta leaks. Last year she received an image of a gun from ANC Women's League secretary-general Meekgo Matuba via text message – this as Hunter and fellow journalist Jeff Wicks reported that former president Jacob Zuma and his allies were plotting to unseat President Cyril Ramaphosa following a meeting at the Maharani hotel in Durban.

Courageous journalist of integrity

The criteria for the award by the South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) include showing integrity, reporting fearlessly and displaying a commitment to serve the people of SA.

Sunday Times editor Bongani Siqoko applauded Hunter's integrity.

“ Qaanitah richly deserves this award. Since joining the Sunday Times she has consistently shown herself to be a courageous journalist of integrity. She does not allow her detractors to throw her off the scent in her quest to inform South Africans on matters of political interest. ”

Hunter said she was humbled by the award as it usually recognised journalists at the end of their careers.

"This validates my efforts over the past eight years. At 25 years old, I am in the formative stage of my career. It is humbling and encouraging to know that this is not the end, but my beginning."

Tiso Blackstar Group MD Andy Gill said: "Everyone at Tiso Blackstar is incredibly proud of Qaanitah and the exceptionally high standards she has set."

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