



International Association of Women in Radio and Television USA

Truth Tellers: Surviving the Truth — Discussion and Sociodrama Workshop

March 22, 2021. 08:00 AM New York

Concept Note:

*Aeschylus's tragedy Agamemnon: the god Apollo gave **Cassandra** the gift of prophecy. When she refused to have sex with him, he decreed that she not be believed. Her predictions were ignored and came to pass. When Troy fell, Agamemnon took her as a sex slave. Both were murdered.*

Many women today have parallel problems to Cassandra's. As community organizers, human rights defenders, journalists; as people with real life experience and different roles such as mothers, partners, and caregivers - they often have information that is important for public policy, but unwelcome to people and institutions making big plans, in politics, in corporations, and in Editorial suites. The consequences of speaking out are not always, but sometimes death. Other punishments for contradicting a dominant narrative can include false arrest, job loss, defamation, violence, official harassment, and the humiliation and frustration of having one's hard-won knowledge belittled and ignored.

On December 10th, World Human Rights Day, a member of IAWRT Afghanistan chapter was assassinated, along with her driver. The same day, the head of IAWRT Secretariat was arrested on false charges in the Philippines. These tragedies are difficult to fight against, especially as each of us has her own fears.

Aside from petitions and fundraisers, we strongly believe that our hope lies in working to change the international outlook on women and our sometimes-unwelcome knowledge. To that end, we encourage ourselves and others to develop a calm and firm and state of mind particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this event we propose to hear from courageous truth-tellers and to conclude with a Sociodrama exercise to help the viewers absorb and process their reactions, and learn more about the parameters of their own courage in this unprecedented time of our history.

List of participants:

Speakers about their own experiences as stigmatized truth-tellers:

Moderator: Michelle Ferrier - Executive Director, Media Innovation Collaboratory/Founder,
TrollBusters.com

Panelists:

Violet Gonda - IAWRT International President, Zimbabwe/UK - longtime radio journalist covering Zimbabwe, often from exile (twice exiled)

Kristina Conti - Public Interest Law Center (PILC), The Philippines (lawyer for Lady Ann Salem, editor of

Manila Today, Communications Officer of -- -IAWRT – arrested on trumped up charges and is sitting in isolation in the Philippines)

Dubravka Simonović - United Nations Special Rapporteur, Violence Against Women Journalists

Hon. Mildred Crump - Councilwoman, Newark, New Jersey

Najiba Ayubi - Journalist, Activist

Parul Koul - The Alphabet – Google Workers Union

Sociodrama Exercise to be led by the President of our USA chapter, **Sheila Dallas**, who is both a journalist and a Theatre of The Oppressed and sociodrama practitioner.

About us –

IAWRT is a global network of women communicators & researchers. With 14 national chapters and members in 54 countries, IAWRT strives to meet the urgent global challenges faced by women in and around the media. It was established in the aftermath of World War II.

Link to list of IAWRT related events in past 6 months:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1I5HSaW09e9lFAirvQUYqOr6BynTqVjiJ/view?usp=sharing>