

# THE 15TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL WOMEN OF COURAGE CELEBRATION

Presented by AMERICAN WOMEN FOR INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING



2022 marked the 15th anniversary of the International Women of Courage Celebration. Presented by American Women for International Understanding in collaboration with the U.S. Department of State, the Celebration was held on May 24th, 2022 in Los Angeles, CA.

Established in 2007, the Secretary of State's International Women of Courage (IWOC) Award honors women around the globe who have demonstrated exceptional courage and leadership in advocating for human rights, women's equality, and social progress, often at great personal risk. Twelve extraordinary women were selected for the 2022 IWOC Award. AWIU's IWOC Celebration was an inspirational and moving tribute to their bravery, leadership, and selfless commitment to freedom and human dignity.

## 2022 International Women of Courage



## AWIU Receives Gender Champion Award from U.S. Department of State

Katrina Fotovat, Senior Official to the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues, presented AWIU with its prestigious Gender Champion Award at the 15th Annual IWOC Celebration. The Award recognized AWIU's long-standing collaboration with the U.S. Department of State and its unwavering commitment to women's rights and gender equality.

Accepting the award on behalf of AWIU, President Maggie Sabbag gratefully acknowledged that the award is a tribute to every AWIU member, sponsor, patron and guest who has supported the IWOC Celebration over the past 15 years.



U.S. Department of State  
Senior Official Katrina Fotovat  
and AWIU President Maggie Sabbag

# Highlights of the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual IWOC Celebration

The 15th Annual IWOC Celebration was hosted by six-time Emmy Award-winning broadcast journalist **Lynette Romero**. “The International Women of Courage represent a Global Sisterhood”, she noted during the Celebration.



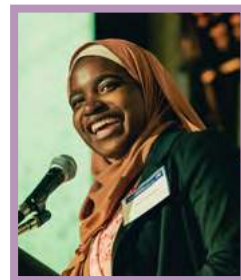
2022 Honorary Chair **Melanne Vermeer**,

Executive Director of the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, and the first U.S. Ambassador for Global Women’s Issues, said of the awardees:

*“Some people see things as they are and ask why. Others dream things that could be and say why not?” The Women of Courage are why not people. They are courageous trailblazers on the frontlines of creating a better world.”*

**Sierra Leone Anderson**,

a 15-year-old Los Angeles Youth Poet Laureate Finalist, received a standing ovation for her uplifting original spoken word performance.



2022 IWOC Celebration Co-Chairs  
Mary Machado Schammel and Nancy Annick

2022 Celebration Co-Chair **Nancy Annick** reflected,

“The Celebration is truly a unique and special experience. You can’t help but be inspired, moved, informed and so grateful to the incredible Women of Courage.”

Co-Chair **Mary Machado Schammel** added, “AWIU is honored and privileged to partner with the DOS in celebrating these extraordinary women leaders and providing them with grants to continue their impactful initiatives.”

## International Women of Courage Alumnae

Four IWOC alumnae were guests of AWIU at the 15th Annual IWOC Celebration. Emcee Romero asked each of them how the Award affected her life.



Roya Sadat  
Afghanistan

- **Roya Sadat** (Afghanistan 2018) reflected on 20 challenging years of telling stories through film about the treatment of women in Afghanistan.
- For **Fadia Thabet** (Yemen 2017), it was difficult to accept the IWOC award because it meant she could no longer work undetected protecting child soldiers.
- **May Sabe Phyu** (Burma 2015) explained that being named an IWOC made her “someone,” which brought increased responsibility.
- **Arbana Xharra** (Kosovo 2015) talked about why, as a journalist and activist, the award made it even more important to keep speaking truth to power.



Fadia Thabet  
Yemen



May Sabe Phyu  
Burma



Arbana Xharra  
Kosovo



# U.S. State Department and AWIU Salute the 2022 International Women of Courage

**Katrina Fotovat**, Senior Official to the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues at the U.S. Department of State, introduced the twelve 2022 International Women of Courage Awardees. She praised them for their commitment to their communities and for their extraordinary courage and self-sacrifice. Biographies of the Awardees are available at [awiu.org/iwoc-celebration](https://awiu.org/iwoc-celebration).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2022 Awardees could not travel to the United States, however, the audience was able to hear directly from them via short videos from their homes, offices, and the streets of their hometowns.

AWIU is proud to present each Awardee with a monetary grant to further her groundbreaking work in her home country.



Katrina Fotovat, Senior Official to the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues

Since 2007, 177 women representing 82 countries have been recognized as International Women of Courage



IWOC Alumnae: May Sabe Phyu, Burma; Fadia Thabet, Yemen; Arbana Xharra, Kosovo; Roya Sadat, Afghanistan



AWIU President Maggie Sabbag, Co-Chair Mary Schammel, and Past AWIU President Janey Wetzel accept the Gender Champion Award



AWIU members, U.S. Department of State guests, and IWOC alumnae at the 2022 IWOC Celebration held in Los Angeles

# Thank You to Our Generous 2022 Sponsors and Patrons

AWIU gratefully recognizes and thanks all sponsors and patrons of the 15th Annual IWOC Celebration. Deep appreciation to Deloitte for its 12th consecutive year as Global Leadership Sponsor, and special thanks to the Deloitte Celebration Planning Team for its invaluable volunteer assistance.



The International Women of Courage Alumnae with Deloitte Volunteers at the 2022 IWOC Celebration

## Join us in 2023 at the 16th Annual International Women of Courage Celebration

American Women for International Understanding will present the 16th Annual International Women of Courage Celebration in March 2023 in Los Angeles. Please visit [awiu.org](http://awiu.org) for further information on AWIU and the International Women of Courage Celebration.

AWIU is a non-profit organization that has been at the forefront of citizen diplomacy since 1968. For over 50 years, AWIU has built bridges of understanding, goodwill, and cooperation among women leaders throughout the world.



*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever does."*

Margaret Mead, Cultural Anthropologist



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