



**FROM: TIMES SQUARE NEW YEAR'S EVE**

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

**TIMES SQUARE NEW YEAR'S EVE  
CELEBRATES JOURNALISM & PRESS FREEDOM;  
HONORS THE COMMITTEE TO PROTECT JOURNALISTS  
WITH NOTED JOURNALISTS ON STAGE AT MIDNIGHT**

***Journalists and Charity Honoree to be the Evening's  
Celebrated Special Guests On Stage to Lead Sixty-Second Countdown to 2019***

**NEW YORK - December 19, 2018** – **Times Square Alliance** and **Countdown Entertainment**, co-organizers of **Times Square New Year's Eve**, announced today that the event this year will officially celebrate journalism and press freedom by honoring the Committee to Protect Journalists as its Official Charity Honoree and inviting some of the most well known journalists on stage at midnight as the official Special Guests for the 2019 Times Square New Year's Eve celebration.

As the evening's Special Guests, the group will push the crystal button on the main stage in the center of Times Square, which signals the lowering of the Waterford Crystal Times Square New Year's Eve Ball. The moment — viewed by billions across the world — officially begins the sixty-second countdown to the New Year. Due in part to the presence of the Special Guests, the moment is historically seen as a celebration of the human spirit and a source of hope for the New Year. The identity of the Special Guests will be announced closer to New Year's Eve, as will the full list of supporting media entities.

Prior Special Guests include former **UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon**, **Muhammad Ali**, **Supreme Court Justice Sonya Sotomayor**, former **Secretary of State Colin Powell**, **Lady Gaga**, former **President Bill Clinton** and then-**Secretary of State Hillary Clinton**, **Medal of Honor winner Salvatore Giunta**, **#MeToo founder Tarana Burke**, **Christopher Reeve**, and **International Rescue Committee President David Miliband**.

“On New Year's Eve we look back and reflect on the major events of the past year, we look forward with a sense of hope, and we celebrate the people and things we value most. This year, we're celebrating the free press and journalism and those who work to protect, preserve and practice it,” said **Tim Tompkins, President of the Times Square Alliance**. “In a place that is synonymous with news and home to multiple national news broadcasts, and which itself was named after a newspaper (which started the New Year's celebration here in 1904), no theme could be more apt as we enter 2019. And because press freedom is a global issue, we encourage everyone worldwide to **#CelebratePressFreedom** with us at the Crossroads of the World.”

“We are very proud to highlight the importance of journalism and a free press as the world unites to countdown to a new year in Times Square,” said **Jeff Straus, President of Countdown Entertainment**. “We are inspired by the incredible work of journalists across the globe, and honor them as represented by our Special Guests.”

“Americans are united in their belief that press freedom and independent journalism are at the heart of our democracy,” said Joel Simon, Executive Director of the Committee to Protect Journalists. “Our country’s commitment to these principles has inspired journalists around the world working in dangerous and difficult conditions. At CPJ, we are humbled to represent the journalists who bring us the news each day. We are inspired to #CelebratePressFreedom on New Year’s Eve and throughout the year ahead.”

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) is an independent, nonprofit organization that promotes press freedom worldwide and defends the right of journalists to report the news safely and without fear of reprisal. CPJ reports on violations in repressive countries, conflict zones, and established democracies alike. In its quest for a free media, CPJ denounces press freedom violations, meets with heads of state and high-ranking officials, spearheads or advises on diplomatic efforts, and works with other organizations to ensure that justice prevails for imprisoned and killed journalists.

#### **About Times Square New Year's Eve:**

The Times Square Alliance and Countdown Entertainment are the organizers of Times Square New Year's Eve. The Times Square Alliance works to improve and promote Times Square so that it retains the energy, edge, and distinctiveness that have made it an icon of entertainment, culture, and urban life. Countdown Entertainment represents the owners of One Times Square and the New Year’s Eve Ball.

For more information about Times Square New Year’s Eve, visit [www.TimesSquareNYC.org](http://www.TimesSquareNYC.org).

To join the Times Square New Year’s Eve conversation on Twitter, follow #BallDrop.

#### **Times Square Alliance:**

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