

ASIL ASSEMBLY AND KEYNOTE WITH MARIA RESSA

The Assembly and Keynote was convened at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 7, 2022. Maria Ressa, co-founder and CEO of Rappler and 2021 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate was the Keynote speaker.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY CATHERINE AMIRFAR

doi:10.1017/amp.2023.33

Amal Clooney unfortunately could not join us for health reasons but sends her warmest regards to everyone.

Maria Ressa is well known to us. She is a journalist, a businesswoman, author, and global terrorism expert who serves as the chief executive officer of the online news website Rappler, which she co-founded in 2012. She was awarded the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to safeguard freedom of expression in the Philippines. She previously spent nearly two decades working as a lead investigative reporter in Southeast Asia for CNN. I am delighted to have her with us. I know we are in for a treat. Welcome, Maria.

Maria, you have worked as a reporter for thirty years. I want to read a bit from what the Nobel Committee said when they awarded you the Peace Prize. It was awarded to you and Russian journalist, Dmitry Muratov last year. They singled you both out as “representatives of all journalists who stand up for freedom of expression,” and they noted at the same time, with some alarm that “democracy and freedom of the press increasingly face adverse conditions.” In your Nobel lecture, you spoke about some of these adverse conditions, including the impact of social media, lack of funding for independent journalism, and impunity for crimes against journalists. What is it about today’s world that makes it so dangerous for journalists, so difficult?

REMARKS BY MARIA RESSA

doi:10.1017/amp.2023.34

I became a journalist because information is power, and that leads to justice. If you do not have the facts, you cannot have rule of law. Part of what is happening today is that impunity reigns precisely because we have now made facts debatable. In the Nobel lecture, I talked about how disinformation exploded like an atom bomb in our ecosystem. Unlike Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it did not kill 140,000 people immediately, but it is having that same impact. This is the last six years we have lived through.

It is so incredible to see so many lawyers here, like Fatou Bensouda, Paul Reichler, and Can Yeginsu, who are trying to keep me out of prison. This is a tough question to answer, except to say that this is a pivotal moment. This is my thirty-sixth year as a journalist, and I have never lived through anything like this. What I have lived through is nothing compared to some of the cases some of you are touching. One of the things I have learned is that if you see something in front of you that is not right, in many instances, you not saying anything gives consent for the bad thing that is happening. Silence is consent. The reason I have had ten arrest warrants in less than two years filed against me is because we did not stay silent and we continue to do our jobs. In the