



FROM: TIMES SQUARE NEW YEAR'S EVE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**TIMES SQUARE NEW YEAR'S EVE ANNOUNCES JOURNALISTS
WHO WILL BE HONORED AS THE EVENING'S SPECIAL GUESTS**

**ESTEEMED GROUP COMPRISES A BROAD SPECTRUM OF JOURNALISTS
TO BE HONORED AS THE INTERNATIONAL EVENT CELEBRATES
PRESS FREEDOM AND JOURNALISM**

***Group Will Press Button that Signals Lowering of Waterford Crystal Times Square
New Year's Eve Ball and Lead 60 Second Countdown to 2019***

NEW YORK - December 29, 2018 – Times Square Alliance and Countdown Entertainment, co-organizers of Times Square New Year's Eve, today announced the journalists that will be honored as the evening's Special Guests, a group that represents a broad spectrum of news organizations, nationally and internationally.

As the official Special Guests, the group will appear on stage with the Committee to Protect Journalists just before midnight to push the crystal button that signals the lowering of the Waterford Crystal Times Square New Year's Eve Ball. The moment – seen by billions around the world – officially begins the 60-second countdown to the New Year. The group will include:

- **Karen Attiah**, Global Opinions Editor, *The Washington Post*
- **Rebecca Blumenstein**, Deputy Managing Editor, *The New York Times*
- **Alisyn Camerota**, Co-Ancor, *CNN New Day*
- **Vladimir Duthiers**, Correspondent, *CBS News* and Anchor, *CBSN*
- **Edward Felsenthal**, Editor-in-Chief, *TIME*
- **Lester Holt**, Anchor, *NBC Nightly News* and *Dateline NBC*
- **Matt Murray**, Editor-in-Chief, *The Wall Street Journal*
- **Martha Raddatz**, Chief Global Affairs Correspondent and "This Week" Co-Ancor, *ABC News*
- **Maria Ressa**, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Editor, *Rappler*
- **Jon Scott**, Anchor, *Fox Report Weekend on Fox News Channel*
- **Karen Toulon**, Senior Editor, *Bloomberg*

Joel Simon, Executive Director of the Committee to Protect Journalists, the Official Charity Honoree of Times Square New Year's Eve, will join the group onstage. 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.

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.**

“We are honored to have such a respected group of media entities and journalists join us to **#CelebratePressFreedom** as we ring in the New Year,” said **Tim Tompkins, President of the Times Square Alliance.** “In one of the world’s most famous public squares it is fitting to celebrate free press and free speech as we reflect on where we’ve been during the past year and what it is we value most as a society.”

Tompkins encouraged news entities, journalists and those who support them “to express their support using the hashtag **#CelebratePressFreedom** or to go to cpi.org to learn more about CPJ.”

“As the Ball drops, the Special Guests will lead the sixty-second countdown to 2019 joined by millions of revelers with a message of unity and harmony for the new year,” said **Jeff Straus, President of Countdown Entertainment.** “We thank the news organizations and the journalists for helping us celebrate journalism and press freedom around the world.”

“The group of journalists who will join us on stage to inaugurate the countdown to 2019 are highly distinguished,” said Joel Simon, Executive Director of the Committee to Protect Journalists. “They are also representatives of all journalists in the United States, and around the world who work hard every day to keep their communities informed and hold the powerful to account. It’s the freedom to do this critical work that we celebrate.”

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.

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

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