

Editor of Russia's Dozhd Gets International Press Freedom Award

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The editor-in-chief of Russian independent television channel Dozhd has received an International Press Freedom Award from the Committee to Protect Journalists.

"Running the only independent TV channel in Russia is just like walking through a minefield," Mikhail Zygar, the channel's editor-in-chief since its founding in 2010, said at the awards ceremony in New York on Tuesday.

"Unfortunately, this award would have been impossible without the terrible pressure — psychological, political and financial — that we've been suffering," Zygar said in his speech, according to a video posted online.

Known for covering politically sensitive issues and the activities of Russia's non-systemic opposition, Dozhd was dropped by Russia's major cable providers in January after publishing a controversial poll about World War II.

Critics, as well as some Dozhd staff members, said the channel's exclusion from cable

providers was linked to a wider Kremlin crackdown on the country's independent media outlets, only a handful of which remain.

The channel has also been hit by President Vladimir Putin's decree banning advertising on private television channels. The ban comes into effect on Jan. 1, 2015.

In addition to Zygar, journalists from Burma, Iran and South Africa were also honored for their courageous reporting by the New York-based nonprofit organization.

Russia currently ranks 148th out of 180 countries in Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index.

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