

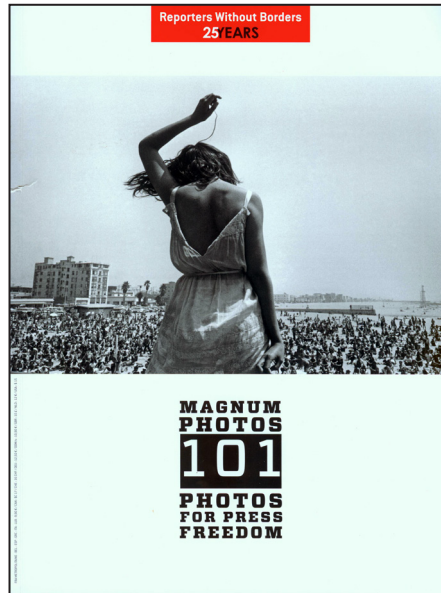
## Press freedom tribute

**Magnum Photos – 101 Photos for Press Freedom.** Paris: Reporters Sans Frontières. 2010, 144pp. ISBN 978-2-915536-89-8

WITH World Press Freedom Day being celebrated again this month (May 3), it is timely to reflect on the achievements of one particular global media freedom advocacy group, which has contributed a quarter century of activism to the cause. One of the characteristics of Reporters Sans Frontières' campaign has been its penchant for stunning posters, creativity, innovation and annual photo collections—motivating one envious International Federation of Journalists advocate from Sydney to dismiss RSF as 'just a publicity machine'.

The Magnum Photos 101 volume marking RSF's 25th year presents many of contemporary history's best-known photographs. Many of them are iconic and have featured in the world's newspapers and magazines. The collection was donated by the celebrated Magnum photo agency to the cause of media freedom.

But why 101 images, when the annual volume usually features 100 photos? According to the publication's editors, they decided to add an additional 101<sup>th</sup> image when going to



press—the only photo published from the year 2010 showing a gigantic road split marked the tragic earthquake in Haiti (p. 26).

This decision by the editors was due to the important role RSF has taken in Haiti while protecting press freedom: 'Initially, so that we could defend the families of journalists murdered under the dictatorship, and now, so that we can provide aid to media outlets devastated by the disaster,' says publisher Jean-François Julliard.

Among the images of political history that Magnum enables readers to relive are Robert Capa's famous shot of a Republican militiaman being struck by a bullet in the Spanish civil war in 1936; Che Guevara holding a

cigar in Havana the same year; the teenager Dalai Lama arriving in Delhi after fleeing Tibet; and Martin Luther King delivering his 1963 'I Have a Dream' speech. The cover features a Dennis Stock image of a 1968 rock-against-the-Vietnam-war festival in California.

Elsewhere in this edition of *Pacific Journalism Review*, professor Mark Pearson writes about the annual RSF World Press Freedom Index ranking and methodology (p. 171-178). While its profile may not be as well known in the Pacific region, its value and importance should be recognised. For a start, it isn't encumbered by the vested self-interest and continual bickering that serve to strangle the glut of Pacific media freedom groups.

I will always thankfully remember that RSF was the only media freedom group active in the Pacific that defended the University of the South Pacific journalism programme in 2000 when its news website was closed in a ham-fisted and failed attempt to gag the neophyte journalists in the award-winning coverage of the George Speight putsch in Fiji. Some local Pacific media 'freedom' groups actually treated this censorship with glee.

Long may RSF call gang leaders, mafia members, fundamentalist leaders, militants, rebels, corrupt business

men as well as the usual suspect government tyrants to account for stifling press freedom. —*Dr David Robie is co-founder of Pacific Media Watch.*