



16 May 2014 - "*Seeing and looking at what others cannot bear to see is what my life is all about*" – Don McCullin

The dangers, challenges and horrors photographers face documenting conflicts or catastrophes became tangible as UNRIC's monthly Ciné-ONU screened "*McCullin*" to a full house of 500 at the Bozar in Brussels on 6 May 2014.



Don McCullin is a revered and celebrated war photographer whose thoughts are documented in the powerful film illustrating his career which has spanned conflicts from all corners of the world - from Cambodia to Belfast, from Vietnam to Biafra.

The documentary offered the audience a chance to see how McCullin himself experienced these conflicts and his role in documenting the atrocities that were taking place.

He elaborated upon his thoughts and concerns in the Q&A that followed the screening, revealing that witnessing and capturing these moments of horror had a profound effect upon him: "We were war junkies. I was addicted, I wanted to prove myself. But that day in Biafra, when I saw the children with their insides hanging out, I sobered up and saw the truth."

Despite having been a war photographer himself, or perhaps exactly because he has been one and knows what it entails, he cautioned others against pursuing such a career. The horrors are often unbearable, and the danger is real.

Yesterday, the world was shocked by the news of the death of [Camille Lepage](#), a 26-year-old photojournalist, who was killed in the Central African Republic in what [some suspect](#) to be a deliberate targeted assassination. Her projects focused on documenting the forgotten, the nameless and faceless, caught in conflict in Africa and included: *You Will Forget Me* and *Vanishing Youth*, that capture the violence of South Sudan. Camille said of her work: "Since I was very little, I've always wanted to go and live in a place where no one else wants to go, and cover in-depth conflict related stories ... I can't accept that people's tragedies are silenced simply because no one can make money out of them."

"The body of Ms Lepage was found by an Operation Sangaris patrol which stopped a vehicle being driven by anti-balaka fighters in the Bouar region," the Elysée Palace said in a statement on Tuesday.

Critics argue that journalists and photographers often put themselves at great risk in an effort to "become the dead man's voice", without being properly supported and insured by today's newspapers.

McCullin encouraged people to have a closer look at what is going on in their own streets at home. He said that "there is a battlefield in the middle of our own city – poverty. A photographer could do a better social service staying in his own country."

His candid and honest account underlined the importance of marking [World Press Freedom Day](#), marked every year on 3 May.

According to figures compiled by Reporters Without Borders, 75 journalists were killed in the course of their work worldwide in 2013. Since the start of this year, 17 have died.

Camille Lepage is the 18th name on this roll call of death.

## War Photographers: seeing and documenting the unbearable

Friday, 16 May 2014 00:00

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*For more information about Ciné-ONU, please contact Karen Davies: [davies@unric.org](mailto:davies@unric.org)*

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