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Journo arrested at '08 GOP convention gets \$100K

MINNEAPOLIS - Journalist Amy Goodman, host of the syndicated program "[Democracy Now!](#)" and two of her producers will receive \$100,000 in a settlement over their arrests during the 2008 Republican National Convention in St. Paul, their attorney said Monday.

Their attorney, Anjana Samant of the Center for Constitutional Rights, also said St. Paul and Minneapolis have agreed to develop a policy and training for police officers on how to avoid infringing on the First Amendment rights of journalists who cover big protests.

The settlement was reached Friday with the aid of U.S. Chief Magistrate Judge Arthur Boylan in St. Paul. The two cities agreed to pay a combined \$90,000 while the federal government agreed to pay \$10,000, Samant said. The lawsuit named the federal government because a Secret Service agent confiscated the press credentials of Goodman and her producers, she said.

"When journalists are arrested, it is not only a violation of the freedom the press, but of the public's right to know," Goodman said in a statement. "When journalists are handcuffed and abused, so is democracy. We should not have to get a record when we put things on the record."

In New York City, where Goodman was covering the protests on Wall Street, she said the money would go "to support independent, unfettered" journalism about such events.

"Dissent is what will save our country. Dissent is what our country was founded on. It's our job to find a place for those voices."

Samant said some minor logistical details still need to be put in writing, but the most important points have been nailed down and both sides have agreed to end the case. Once the final document is signed and formally approved by a judge, she said, the document will be public.

Jon Iverson, an attorney for the local governments and law enforcement agencies named in the lawsuit, downplayed the significance of the settlement. He said it includes no admission of liability and lets St. Paul and Minneapolis avoid the costs of further litigation.

Iverson also said the three plaintiffs won't get much individually after their costs are subtracted. He said police had policies in place to protect the rights of journalists before the convention and they'll be happy to repeat the training.

The cost of the settlement was to be covered by an insurance policy taken out by convention organizers, Minneapolis city spokesman Matt Laible said.

Goodman and producers Nicole Salazaar and Sharif Abdel Kouddous were among an estimated 40 to 50 journalists arrested while covering street protests outside the convention. About 800 demonstrators and bystanders also were arrested during the convention. Authorities eventually dropped all charges against the arrested journalists and many of the protesters and bystanders.

Samant noted that both the Democratic and Republican parties will hold their next national conventions next year, and that large scale Occupy Wall Street protests against corporate greed

have been under way in New York and other cities in recent days.

In light of those protests, Goodman said, the settlement "should be a warning to police departments around the country to stop arresting and intimidating journalists. We see the financial settlement and the requirement that the police departments receive First Amendment training on the rights of the press as a major step forward."

Goodman's New York-based show airs daily on over 900 radio and TV stations and over the Internet.

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