THE Awards 2019 – International Collaboration of the Year

Institution/Nominee	University of Essex
Title	Staff and students from six global universities partner with Amnesty International, to develop new approach to investigations
Key personnel	Dr Daragh Murray, University of Essex Dr Ella McPherson, University of Cambridge Sam Dubberley, Amnesty International, Germany Donatella Rovera, Amnesty International, lead investigator in Raqqa Professor Alexa Koenig, University of California Berkeley Lindsay Ernst, University of Hong Kong Adebayo Okeowo, University of Pretoria Samer Muscati, University of Toronto
URL	https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/09/digitally-dissecting-atrocities-amnesty-internationals-open-source-investigations/
Submission	A first-of-its kind collaboration between Amnesty International, Airwars, and six universities developed a new approach to investigations, resulting in the most comprehensive investigation into civilian deaths in modern conflict. Our collaboration allowed us to effectively challenge the US-led Coalition's denial of significant civilian casualties during the June–October 2017 campaign to retake the Syrian city of Raqqa from so-called "Islamic State". Students used open source investigation techniques to identify videos and photos of Raqqa on social media, then geolocated the buildings destroyed using Google Earth. Crowd-sourced volunteers used free satellite imagery to find the approximate date these buildings were destroyed, and Amnesty investigators then interviewed witnesses and survivors to uncover the truth of the attacks. 1600 civilian deaths were credibly identified. This ambitious, original and ongoing international collaboration has enabled large-scale investigations that would previously have been impossible and delivered a constantly expanding, worldwide network of skilled student investigators.