**José María López crowned FIA WTCC Champion in Thailand**

2nd November 2015

The Citroën star secured\* back-to-back WTCC crowns with his ninth victory of 2015 at the Chang International circuit in Buriram. With a lights to flag victory in Race 1, José María López’s pace enabled him to steer away from the “demolition derby” type race that was taking place behind him, numerous collisions and cars being forced to retire due to damage and technical problems. At the chequered flag a tearful and emotional López paid tribute to his family and friends for their support as indeed showing his gratitude to Citroën Racing for giving him such an opportunity. Throughout Race 1, only Sebastien Loeb kept the pressure on López to eventually cross the line as runner up and Ma following closely behind. This time Yvan Muller was unable to finish the race as he took damage in the second of two multi-car collisions on the first lap, which resulted in the safety car being deployed.

Honda’s Tiago Monteiro claimed the ghost “win” in Race 2, which was stopped with three laps left for safety reasons due to fading light, only to be excluded from the results following post-event technical checks. Honda Racing Team JAS announced its intention to appeal the decision to the FIA International Court of Appeal. The race had been due to run for 14 laps and finish in twilight but its late start following the safety car period in the opening counter meant officials were left with no alternative other than to bring the race to a premature conclusion as darkness descended with Sébastien Loeb closing on Monteiro for top spot.

With Loeb taking a win and a second place and Yvan Muller failing to score points due to damage to his car from contact, the nine-time world rally champion is five points ahead of his team-mate heading to the WTCC’s inaugural night race in Qatar later this month. The Yokohama Drivers’ Trophy title for independent racers will also be decided at this race weekend, between Norbert Michelisz and Mehdi Bennani.

\*Subject to final Official FIA Confirmation