

# 2026 World Press Photo Contest Jury Report

## World Press Photo of the Year

*Separated by ICE*

**Carol Guzy**, United States, ZUMA Press, iWitness, for *Miami Herald*

In 2025, immigration enforcement escalated at an unprecedented scale across the United States—in workplaces, homes, on street corners, and inside federal courthouses where families arrived for scheduled hearings, in good faith. This photograph captures the harrowing moment of a family being separated. It was made in one of the only courthouses in the country where photographers have been granted access—a single hallway where Carol Guzy and others showed up, day after day, to document what was happening. What Guzy records here is not an isolated moment of grief, rather, it is evidence and documentation of a government policy being applied systematically to people who followed the rules they were given. This image was selected from a larger body of work by Guzy, awarded in the North and Central America Stories category. In a democracy, the camera's presence in that hallway is not incidental, it is essential.

## Finalists

*The Trials of the Achi Women*

**Victor J. Blue**, United States, for *The New York Times Magazine*

This powerful portrait of Doña Paulina Ixpata Alvarado conveys the Achi women's persistent struggle for justice in Guatemala, as citizen's who endured sexual violence inflicted as a weapon of war and continued to live alongside their perpetrators. Its classical, restrained approach emphasizes the women's dignity and authority, deliberately countering historical visual narratives that frame women—particularly survivors of sexual violence—as powerless subjects. Instead, the portrait documents a moment of collective strength at the conclusion of a fourteen-year-long struggle for justice (2011-2025).

*Aid Emergency in Gaza*

**Saber Nuraldin**, Palestine, EPA Images

This image of people climbing onto an aid truck captures sheer desperation—rendering visible the scale and urgency of famine in the second year of this war in Gaza. Starvation and famine, affecting more than half a million Palestinians, was the result of an Israeli blockade of the Gaza strip and was a defining humanitarian issue of 2025. The straight forward composition forces the viewer to pause, and offers visual evidence of famine, and the destruction surrounding the scene. The jury felt that the photograph confronts the viewer with the reality of the situation while also pointing to its collective impacts and global implications.

Winners

## AFRICA

### Singles

*When Giants Fall*

**Halden Krog**, South Africa

The image of the culling of an elephant family presents a shocking and unsettling scene which immediately compels the viewer to seek further information. By confronting the realities of wildlife management in Zimbabwe, the photograph highlights the complex tensions between conservation, local livelihoods, and human–animal conflict. Its stark visual impact brings attention to an important issue on the continent, expanding the narrative beyond conflicts more commonly associated with the region.

*Joburg Ballet School*

**Ihsaan Haffejee**, South Africa, for GroundUp

This image captures a quiet and intimate moment of preparation among young ballerinas in Soweto, South Africa. The strong use of color, light, and lines reveals a sense of tranquility and concentration while also hinting at the girls' anticipation. Taken from a local photographer's perspective, the photograph highlights the beauty of everyday life and stands out for its calm, reflective tone.

*Children Who Do Not Exist*

**Kiana Hayeri**, Iran/Canada, for *The New York Times*

The portrait of Edith Magomere Ingasiani and her nine-year-old daughter conveys a strong sense of emotion, drawing the viewer in and prompting questions about their experience. Through thoughtful lighting and composition, the photographer uses portraiture effectively to humanize the challenges migrant domestic workers face to obtain necessary documentation in Saudi Arabia, and the consequences for their families. The artistic choices align closely with the story, creating an intimate entry point into a topic that is otherwise difficult to visualize.

### Stories

*Sudan's War: A Nation Trapped*

**Abdulmonam Eassa**, Syria/France, for *Le Monde*

This story presents a series of extraordinary images documenting the ongoing crisis in Sudan from a ground-level perspective. Showing devastated towns, bullet-scarred buildings, and scenes that evoke the intensity of the front lines, the work conveys the reality of a conflict that is often difficult to access or witness. The final edit brings viewers directly into the environment of the war, offering a powerful and uncommon visual record of the situation as it unfolds.

*Farīsāt: Gunpowder's Daughters*

**Chantal Pinzi**, Italy, Panos Pictures

This story offers a refreshing and empowering portrayal of women. Through imaginative scenes combined with a distinctive palette, the project presents beautiful and unexpected moments, expanding the viewer's sense of what is possible in these women's lives. The photographer's unique visual approach presents women in a way that feels both original and uplifting.

*Madagascar's Gen Z Protests*

**Luis Tato**, Spain, Agence France-Presse

The jury recognized this story as a key highlight of the Gen Z uprisings which took place in 2025, reflecting a phenomenon with clear global resonance. Through dynamic scenes and varied views of youth-led actions, the project captures the scale of young people taking to the streets, conveying both energy and urgency. The images collectively offer a meaningful visual record of youth activism in 2025.

## Long-Term Project

*Moon Dust*

**Mohamed Mahdy**, Egypt, Arab Documentary Photography Program

The jury felt that this story demonstrates the photographer's long-term dedication to capturing the health hazards faced by a community with remarkable depth and intimacy. Each frame is intentional, contributing to a body of work that balances symbolic and metaphorical imagery with powerful portraits and contextual details that convey the experience of living through environmental violence. The jury praised the edit for its outstanding quality, thoughtful observation, and the local photographer's ability to reveal an important and ongoing issue with clarity and care.

## ASIA-PACIFIC AND OCEANIA

### Singles

*Bondi Beach Terror Attack*

**Edwina Pickles**, Australia, *The Sydney Morning Herald*

This image captures a decisive and chaotic moment following a mass shooting that took place at a Jewish Hanukkah celebration in Sydney, Australia. The photograph is a powerful visual record of the devastation and emotional impact on those present. Through careful composition and timing, the photographer conveys the scene's scale, the shock of the officers, and the broader context of the event—providing insight into the consequences on the community. The jury recognized this as an important example of press photography, showing how a single frame can capture the immediacy of an event while also engaging with its broader global significance.

*Mountain Resident of Wanglang*

**Rob G. Green**, United States, National Geographic Society, Henry Luce Foundation

This image of a wild panda marks a rare and historically significant moment. Taken from a low-angle camera trap, the composition and the panda's gaze create an intimate, engaging perspective, offering an authentic depiction of the animal in its natural habitat. The photograph—the result of a decade-long collaboration between storytellers and scientists—serves not only as an energizing example of visual journalism, but also as crucial evidence of the continued existence of wild pandas.

### *A Desperate Plea*

**Tyrone Siu**, Hong Kong, Reuters

This image captures an emotionally charged moment, conveying resident Mr Wong's powerlessness, shock, and grief while his wife was trapped in the blaze. The composition includes rich contextual details—from the scale of the buildings, fire, and firefighters, to the visceral human reaction—immersing the viewer in the situation without the intrusion of the photographer's presence. The photograph succeeds in eliciting empathy, allowing us to feel the subject's emotions while offering a vivid record of a defining moment from 2025.

## Stories

### *Wedding in the Flood*

**Aaron Favila**, Philippines, Associated Press

This story offers a fresh perspective on climate change and intensifying tropical storms affecting the region, capturing the scale of the disaster while centering the resilience of local communities. The story demonstrates a range of symbolic, memorable images, showing people continuing celebrations despite rising waters. By highlighting both the human and environmental dimensions, the photographer provides a great visual record of a recurring crisis with growing significance.

### *Scam Hub Under Siege*

**Jes Aznar**, Philippines, for *The New York Times*

This story provides a rare, inside look at facilities in Myanmar where “scammers” are, in fact, victims of human trafficking. Through strong, accessible images, the photographer reveals the unimaginable scale and complexity of these crimes, highlighting how seemingly ordinary offices are places where people are effectively enslaved. The work offers regional insight; transforming an abstract news report into a vivid visual account of exploitation.

### *The Last Dolphin Hunters*

**Matthew Abbott**, Australia, Oculi, for *The New York Times*

This story offers a multilayered and visually compelling look at the traditional practice of dolphin hunting in the Solomon Islands, highlighting the intersection of culture, survival, and environmental change. Through strong composition, use of color, and documentation of intimate encounters, the images reveal the complexities of identity, resilience, and shifting livelihoods amidst climate pressures such as sea level rise. Rather than prescribing judgment, the bold and thoughtfully edited narrative invites viewers to engage in understanding a way of life that navigates ethical, social, and environmental realities.

## Long-Term Project

*Motherhood at 60*

**Wu Fang**, China

This long-term project offers an intimate and layered portrayal of a Chinese family; exploring the impacts of the one-child policy on parents, while emphasizing love, care, and resilience. The photographer's dedication and strong editing convey the passage of time and capture themes of motherhood and loss, with a sense of positivity and universality. The work breaks stereotypes and presumptions, and transforms a personal story into a broader reflection on societal pressures, opportunity, and enduring family bonds.

## EUROPE

### Singles

*Russian Attack on Kyiv*

**Evgeniy Maloletka**, Ukraine, Associated Press

This image captures the shock and vulnerability of a survivor in Kyiv, Ukraine. Deep shadows contrasted with a single light source draw attention to striking details—the woman's lost gaze and her clean, loose shoes—that emphasize the suddenness and human costs of Russia's ongoing attacks. In the fifth year of this conflict, the jury highlighted this work as a powerful record of an individual's experience, honoring the skill and dedication of local Ukrainian photographers.

*Emma the Social Robot*

**Paula Hornickel**, Germany

This story offers a contemporary look at elders in Europe, exploring themes of loneliness, care, and the growing role of robotics in daily life. Through a distinct color palette the scene balances humor and tenderness, prompting reflection and highlighting both the emotional intimacy and the subtle isolation of the interaction. The work prompts viewers to consider the future of care and human connection, presenting a visually striking, socially resonant portrait of an aging population.

*Polar Bear on Sperm Whale*

**Roie Galitz**, Israel

This photograph depicts a polar bear eating a dead and decomposing sperm whale floating in polar pack ice. The photographer effectively uses a drone perspective to capture a technically challenging moment and reveal a scene that would have otherwise remained unseen. The composition invites the viewer to linger—revealing the bear after the eye observes the whale—while evoking metaphorical reflections on melting ice and environmental change. Its unusual perspective and scale provoke curiosity and wonder, turning the frame into a visual and conceptual study of nature.

## Stories

### *Burned Land*

**Brais Lorenzo**, Spain, EFE, Revista 5W, *El País*

This story offers an urgent and complete view of the wildfires devastating Spain, providing close proximity to the flames combined with the photographer's personal perspective. Through a bold, unified palette, and varied compositions, the images convey the scale of the fires, the emptiness of depopulated villages, and the complex interplay between shifting landscapes, climate change, and the human cost of local policy decisions. By highlighting both environmental and social dimensions, the work situates the local disaster within the broader context of Europe's rapidly expanding wildfire crisis.

### *Drone Wars*

**David Guttenfelder**, United States, *The New York Times*

This story provides a comprehensive look at the use of drones in the Russo-Ukrainian war, illustrating the construction and deployment of these new weapons and their human impact. Through careful editing, the project shows a variety of angles; from young people assembling drones, the protection measures for civilians, to the broader technological and tactical aspects of the battlefield. By combining the human consequences with the innovation and testing of military technology, the work offers a complete perspective on a conflict increasingly shaped by technological warfare.

### *Engla Louise*

**Sanna Sjöswärd**, Sweden/Iran, for *Corren*

This story presents a delicate, visually striking portrayal of Engla Louise as she navigates severe illness. Using a distinct color palette, the work preserves a sense of dignity and respect while reflecting the distortion of reality experienced by Lernäs. Through a collaborative approach, the photographer dignifies her, showing her dreams of becoming a ballerina alongside the care and support of her family. The project conveys complex, disturbing emotions with sensitivity, offering rare insight into this psychiatric disorder while emphasizing individuality and resilience.

## Long-Term Project

### *Extramuros*

**William Keo**, France/Cambodia, La Bibliothèque Nationale de France, *Die Zeit*

This long-term project offers an intimate view of suburban life in France, illustrating the daily experiences of second- and third-generation migrants from within their own communities. Close access to friends, family, and neighbors, creates space for personal narratives to describe existing social tensions with honesty, while revealing the richness of multiculturalism. Through dignified portraits, the work provides a unique perspective on migration, belonging, and the realities of life in European suburbs, resonating within the region and beyond.

## NORTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA

### Singles

*Columbia University Pro-Palestine Protests*

**Alex Kent**, United States, for *The New York Times*

This photograph captures the arrest of a demonstrator outside of Columbia University, in New York City, highlighting the government crackdown on higher education and the suppression of student activism in support of Palestine. Through thoughtful composition the image conveys the immediate consequences on freedom of speech and the broader threats to the educational system. The jury recognized it as a powerful visual statement on the social and political pressures facing universities, contextualizing the impact on students, alumni, and academic freedom more broadly in the United States.

*Portland Protests ICE*

**Jan Sonnenmair**, United States

This image skillfully captures the scenes of the deployment of federal forces in military-style tactical gear, in response to ICE demonstrators in Portland, Oregon. Through a dynamic composition, intentional use of light, lines, and multiple points of action—from protestors, to pepper spray and flashlights—the photo conveys the intensity and complexity of the scene, rewarding careful observation. The jury recognized this photograph as a historically resonant image that characterizes the social and political tensions in 2025 in the United States.

*The Trials of the Achi Women*

**Victor J. Blue**, United States, for *The New York Times Magazine*

This powerful portrait of Doña Paulina Ixpata Alvarado conveys the Achi women's persistent struggle for justice in Guatemala, as citizen's who endured sexual violence inflicted as a weapon of war and continued to live alongside their perpetrators. Its classical, restrained approach emphasizes the women's dignity and authority, deliberately countering historical visual narratives that frame women—particularly survivors of sexual violence—as powerless subjects. Instead, the portrait documents a moment of collective strength at the conclusion of a fourteen-year-long struggle for justice (2011-2025).

### Stories

*ICE Arrests at New York Court*

**Carol Guzy**, United States, Zuma Press, iWitness, for *Miami Herald*

This project powerfully documents the human cost of family separations by ICE in the United States; capturing fear, chaos, and the surreal reality faced by law abiding families. Through the photographer's sustained, self-driven commitment, the images reveal inhumane details—masked agents, a shackled young woman and a brutalized mother—highlighting both suffering and family unity. The work exemplifies the crucial role of visual journalism in evidencing the consequences of government actions that might otherwise go unseen.

## *Los Angeles on Fire*

**Ethan Swope**, United States, for Associated Press

This story captures the devastating Los Angeles fires, conveying both the scale of destruction and the impact on communities; with a range of children and elders represented. Through strong colors and dynamic images, the work communicates the urgency and chaos of evacuations, while details like Christmas decorations and the visualization of spreading Santa Ana winds situate the tragedy in a specific time and place. The project offers a well-rounded perspective on loss, resilience, and communal experience amid an unprecedented disaster.

## *Tanner's Song*

**Jahi Chikwendiu**, United States, *The Washington Post*

This intimate human story, exploring the rise of cancer among younger populations, was told beautifully, with sensitivity and respect. The traditional black-and-white documentary style balances tenderness with the gravity of the subject and draws the viewer in, enabling a respectful observation of the family's experience. Each frame holds power, demonstrating photography's important role in documenting critical health issues and fostering reflection and dialogue.

## Long-Term Project

### *Mexico, A Changing Climate*

**César Rodríguez**, Mexico, Norwegian Red Cross, SNCA, *The New York Times*

This project provides an informed, local perspective on the effects of climate change in Mexico; highlighting floods, drought, water shortages, and the displacement of entire communities. Through poetic and well-composed images, the photographer conveys the compounded impacts of environmental pressures, political decisions, and a lack of social support. By focusing on fishing communities and vulnerable populations in urban areas, the work offers a nuanced portrayal of how climate change is reshaping culture and daily life in the region.

## SOUTH AMERICA

### Singles

#### *A Territory of Hope*

**Priscila Ribeiro**, Brazil

This image addresses housing challenges in Brazil while celebrating universal themes of family, community, and love. Through a warm, intimate portrait of a grandmother caring for her grandchildren, the photo conveys joy, togetherness, and the everyday resilience of families living in uncertain conditions.

#### *Funeral for "The Four of Malvinas"*

**Santiago Arcos**, Ecuador, for Reuters

This story depicts a moment during the wake of two of four murdered children, who were detained by the Ecuadorian military after a soccer match, and later found burned in a rural area controlled by criminal groups—a case that has been described by human rights organizations

as a possible forced disappearance. The photograph conveys horror through striking details and highlights the scale of violence and its emotional impact.

## *Milei's Argentina*

**Tadeo Bourbon**, Argentina, for *Revista Mu*

This image captures a decisive moment during protests against Milei's government in Argentina, highlighting aging citizens' struggle for pensions and access to medication. Through precise timing and dynamic composition, it emphasizes the stark disparity and imbalance of force between heavily armed police and a lone elder priest. The photograph stands as a powerful representation of the broader movement and the challenges faced by those advocating for social justice.

## Stories

### *Those Who Carry the Dead*

**Eduardo Anizelli**, Brazil, *Folha de S.Paulo*

This story provides essential documentation of a major breaking news event. Through careful editing, the images convey the magnitude of the incident, including what took place over the course of two days in the mountains, favelas, and the impact on the community, while highlighting police corruption and the indiscriminate use of force. The work stands as a powerful record, emphasizing the importance of bearing witness to ensure that such events are not forgotten nor repeated.

### *Manacillos: A Return to Life*

**Ever Andrés Mercado Puentes**, Colombia

This hyper-local story highlights the festive gathering of the Afro-descendant Juntas community on the banks of the Yurumanguí river. Coming from the nearby city Buenaventura, the photographer sheds light on a culturally significant narrative that is often overlooked. Through close access and a strong selection of images, the work demonstrates respect and dedication; capturing the Junta's reverence for their heritage while telling a story of resistance and resilience. The project serves as an important anthropological record of a historically silenced population.

### *Name the Absence*

**Ferley A. Ospina**, Colombia

This project explores the absence of fathers, creating an intimate and emotionally resonant narrative. Through poetic, lyrical photography, the images successfully convey a strong sense of isolation and sadness in a subtle yet powerful way, making absence tangible without overt explanation. The project serves as a private visual diary, exemplifying the strength of photojournalism as a tool to explore, at once, personal and universal stories.

## Long-Term Project

*The Human Cost of Agrotoxins*

**Pablo E. Piovano**, Argentina, Manuel Rivera Ortiz Foundation, Philip Jones Griffiths Foundation, Lawen.doc

This long-term project demonstrates a strong, distinct voice, documenting the increasing usage of agrochemicals in communities and the ensuing impacts. Through intimate, lyrical frames and sustained engagement, the photographer builds a necessary visual narrative of everyday life, and health effects, presenting community action with dignity and respect. Partially self-funded and meticulously executed, the work effectively uses a classic documentary style to identify the issue and convey their own relationship to the community. This work serves as an inspiring example of impactful photojournalism.

## WEST, CENTRAL, AND SOUTH ASIA

### Singles

*Nepal's Gen Z Uprising*

**Narendra Shrestha**, Nepal, EPA Images

This striking image captures the scale and intensity of a major news event in Nepal, in which key administrative buildings were destroyed and the government unseated. Its composition and perspective convey both the magnitude of the moment and the significant role of Gen Z in challenging long-standing political power.

*Aid Emergency in Gaza*

**Saber Nuraldin**, Palestine, EPA Images

This image of people climbing onto an aid truck captures sheer desperation—rendering visible the scale and urgency of famine in the second year of this war in Gaza. Starvation and famine, affecting more than half a million Palestinians, was the result of an Israeli blockade of the Gaza strip and was a defining humanitarian issue of 2025. The straight forward composition forces the viewer to pause, and offers visual evidence of famine, and the destruction surrounding the scene. The jury felt that the photograph confronts the viewer with the reality of the situation while also pointing to its collective impacts and global implications.

*A Daughter's Grief in Kashmir*

**Yasir Iqbal**, India, *Outlook India Magazine*

This image provides an intimate portrayal of the human cost of cross-border shelling during the conflict between India and Pakistan. Through close, carefully composed framing, the photograph conveys grief without dramatization, allowing the viewer to sit with the moment and reflect on its impact. The work underscores the impact of conflict on the communities living along this volatile border.

## Stories

*"I'm Afraid": Afghan Women Face US Aid Cuts*

**Elise Blanchard**, France, for *Time*

This story provides a timely and impactful look at the consequences of US aid cuts and Taliban rule on maternal health and child morbidity in Afghanistan, highlighting the human cost of the withdrawal of aid from the healthcare sector in a collapsing economy. Through strong, sensitively executed images, the photographer shows, with dignity, the determination of affected women and the midwives who care for them. The work offers a fresh perspective and insight into an urgent news story as it continues to unfold.

*A Syrian City Rebuilds, Still Divided*

**Nicole Tung**, Hong Kong/United States, VII Photo, for *The New York Times*

This story offers a thoughtful look at life in Syria after intense conflict; with a focus on people returning to and rebuilding their lives. By centering reconstruction efforts, and the routines of daily life, the photographer documents what it means to move forward in the aftermath of conflict. The work stands out for its intelligent, human-centered approach.

*Witnessing Gaza*

**Saher Alghorra**, Palestine, for *The New York Times*

This project offers a powerful and carefully edited record of the war in Gaza and the daily struggles of its people. Images of civilians killed while seeking food aid, the malnourishment of a child and his mother, the destruction of homes, and a family breaking their Ramadan fast amid devastation all reveal fragments of life under constant threat. Captured by a local photographer working under immense personal and professional pressure, the series carries a rare urgency and intimacy. The jury recognizes that the photographer experienced the same danger, displacement, hunger, and loss reflected in his images. The work therefore bears witness to a reality the world might otherwise not see, affirming the essential role of local journalists in times of war.

## Long-Term Project

*Hijacked Education*

**Diego Ibarra Sánchez**, Spain

This long-term project examines the impact of conflict on children across multiple regions, emphasizing education, resilience, and the ongoing struggle of societies affected by war. Through consistent, committed coverage over several years, the photographer combines intimate portraits, symbolic imagery, and children's own quotes to convey their experiences, needs and hopes. The work offers a globally resonant account of how education and daily life shape the next generation in the aftermath of conflict.