

**JUDGING PROCEDURES
2026 CONTEST**

A - INTRODUCTION TO THE 2026 CONTEST AND REGIONAL MODEL	2
B - STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY	3
C - ROLES IN THE JUDGING PROCESS	5
D - GENERAL PROCEDURES	6
E - JUDGING CRITERIA AND REPRESENTATION REQUIREMENT	8
F - CODE OF ETHICS	10
G - ENTRY RULES	13
H - CATEGORIES	17
I - PRIZES	18
J - JUDGING ROUNDS	19
(I) Specific responsibilities for each jury	20
(II) Round: 1	21
(III) Round: 2	22
(IV) Round: 3	23
(V) Round: 4	24
(VI) Round: 5 (finals)	25
K - PHOTO OF THE YEAR SELECTION	29
L - VERIFICATION PROCESS	31
(I) Manipulation review for Single, Stories and Long-Term Project entries	31
(II) Fact-checking	32
(III) Story text	32
M - PROCESS FOR ISSUES ARISING AFTER PRIZES HAVE BEEN AWARDED	33
APPENDIX 1 - CAPTION GUIDANCE	34
APPENDIX 2 - MANIPULATION GUIDANCE	35
APPENDIX 3 - MANIPULATION REVIEW	39

A - INTRODUCTION TO THE 2026 CONTEST AND REGIONAL MODEL

Four years ago, we restructured the World Press Photo Contest to reflect a more global perspective. Entries were grouped by region, and professional regional juries were introduced, ensuring that news and documentary photography from every corner of the world would be recognized and awarded. As a result, entries from underrepresented regions have risen, with most winners each year being local to the region they won in. Notably, entrants local to the African continent increased by 33% in 2025.

In each of the six regions of the contest, a selection of entries per category is first made by a regional jury. Each is composed of five professionals from and/or working in that region, with a range of expertise. With the knowledge of the region, their deliberations are informed by their political, social and cultural understanding of the region. Once the regional juries have made their selection of entries, the global jury, composed of the six regional jury chairs and the global jury chair, decides on the 42 regional winners and from those, the World Press Photo of the Year.

The core motivation behind the regional contest model is to give a platform to more diverse accounts of our world. In order to adequately represent and contextualize stories, World Press Photo presents the jury with relevant information about the photographer in order to facilitate a more comprehensive approach to understanding and judging entries. In order to ensure that the jury awards a diverse group of winners, we have also established representation criteria to select at least one local winner and one winner identifying as female or non-binary per region.

As you begin your deliberations, we encourage you to bring the full depth of your expertise and curiosity to the task ahead. Your commitment to nuance, context and fairness is vital in a time of increasing polarisation, and your decisions will help shape a truly global understanding of the world we share. Our annual exhibition reaches over 4 million people worldwide and we reach millions more online.

Thank you for taking on this responsibility, we're counting on your insight to ensure that the World Press Photo contest continues to champion understanding, connection, authenticity and excellence in visual journalism.

B - STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

The World Press Photo Contest rewards the best photojournalism and documentary photography of the past year. It acts as a platform that connects professionals and their work to a global audience through high quality, non-fiction reporting, and storytelling that can be trusted.

The criteria for entries is that they are accurate and visually compelling insights about our world. Entrants must ensure that all entered material has been created ethically and that it provides a fair representation of the stories and people photographed. It must also comply with World Press Photo's Code of Ethics (section F).

World Press Photo sets the contest categories and entry rules, requires entrants to accept the contest code of ethics, and selects the jury. Once appointed, the jurors are independent of the organisation, and its staff members and other representatives have no vote on which entry wins.

Once the winners have been decided and announced, they are presented to the world via World Press Photo's website, social media channels, exhibition and yearbook. This means that millions of people around the world see the winning photographs and stories, often for the first time.

Being a global platform gives us the responsibility to present the most accurate and compelling work. As such, without restricting the jury's decisions, we would like the jury to consider the following when deliberating on the entries:

- Whether the photographs and stories under consideration reinforce or challenge stereotypes.
- Whether the images and stories under consideration repeat well-known examples or are distinctive.
- Whether graphic and violent photographs are appropriate for the story presented, especially when they involve vulnerable people and/or groups.
- The entrant must ensure that consent has been appropriately handled, with consideration for relevant local and international laws and for the ability of an individual to give informed consent, for example when working with vulnerable people and children. Consider whether individuals and/or groups are adequately informed about the potential use and distribution of photographs via publication, and what impact that could have on them. Information about consent should be indicated in the caption.
- Consider whether measures have been taken by the entrant to protect identity, especially when photographing vulnerable individuals and/or groups and children—either when photographing or in the caption.

Photographing children and teenagers can be highly sensitive, as they are more vulnerable and not always able to make good judgments for themselves. In these cases,

the right to freedom of expression has to be balanced against the rights of the child to privacy and freedom from fear and exploitation.

We recognize these are often matters of judgment, but they indicate some of the issues World Press Photo deals with as it presents the winning stories to the world.

C - ROLES IN THE JUDGING PROCESS

The judging process for the World Press Photo contest involves six regional juries and a global jury. It takes place in several rounds over a six-week period in January-February of each year.

We are working with six regional juries: *Africa, Asia-Pacific and Oceania, Europe, North and Central America, South America, and West, Central, and South Asia*. Each jury consists of five members and judges the first three rounds of entries submitted to their region.

Each jury has a chair responsible for maintaining the integrity of the process, ensuring the deliberations are conducted in accordance with the highest standards, and making certain that all jury members are fully involved in the judging process. Unless otherwise agreed upon with all jurors, English is the sole operating language of the contest and the juries (translation assistance will be provided where possible).

The global jury, consisting of the global jury chair and the six chairs of the regional juries, then selects the winners. The global jury is assisted by a secretary. The secretary is responsible for all procedural matters and ensures the rules and procedures are fairly and properly applied. The secretary does not contribute to debate on the merits of any entry, and has no vote in the balloting.

Each jury is supported by a jury coordinator, who is a staff member of World Press Photo. The coordinator is the principal conduit of information between the jury and the organization on all matters related to the judging. The coordinator does not contribute to debate on the merits of any entry, and has no vote in the balloting.

In case of illness or other exceptional circumstances, World Press Photo can seek replacements. The regional juries require a minimum of three members to take a valid decision, the global jury requires a minimum of five members to be attending the judging. Before judging begins, members of the jury are required to sign a statement committing themselves to following the procedures laid down in these judging procedures. They are also required to sign a non-disclosure agreement ensuring both the confidentiality of jury debates and the details of the winners until the official announcement dates, and an anti-harassment policy.

D - GENERAL PROCEDURES

The general procedures ensure a fair judging process and must be adhered to at all times.

- (i) Jury members cannot enter the contest in the year they are judging.
- (ii) Each jury member, whether an ordinary member or chair, has one equal vote.
- (iii) Jurors cannot abstain from voting at any stage of the judging process.
- (iv) Jurors have to do the judging themselves. No other person is allowed to do the judging on their behalf.
- (v) All proceedings and deliberations of each jury are conducted in confidence. Jurors are required to sign a non-disclosure agreement to ensure they do not reveal any details of the deliberations, or the identity of regional or global winners prior to the public announcement. This means jurors cannot discuss any aspect of the entries, debates or decisions, both during the process and after the announcement of the results, with anyone other than a fellow juror.
- (vi) During the judging process, caption information and information about the background of the entrant (nationality, where they are based, gender, funding) will be made available to the jury at certain stages.

The jury members will not be given the photographer's name, or other personal information not listed above, during the judging process. This is to preserve the anonymity of the entrants as much as possible until winners are selected.

However, please be advised that entrants may mistakenly provide their names in the captions they provide, which is unavoidable.

At no stage of the process - and in no discussion either in or outside the judging process - should jury members speculate on, or reveal, any names of participating photographers, agencies or publications.

- (vii) If jury members recognize they are personally involved in submitted work, through either a personal or professional relationship, they must declare their conflict of interest openly at the beginning of any discussions on the work. The juror cannot abstain from voting on the work.
- (viii) In the global jury, the chairs represent their regional juries and present to the rest of the global jury why their regional jury has selected the entries in their region. The global jury will take into account this information when deliberating on the entries they forward to the later rounds and choosing the winners.

- (ix) The global jury must award 42 contest winners, three per Singles and Stories, and one per Long-Term Project, per region (*Africa, Asia-Pacific and Oceania, Europe, North and Central America, South America, and West, Central, and South Asia*).
- (x) The global jury must award one World Press Photo of the Year, along with two runners-up. All winning photographs taken in 2025 will be eligible for this prize.
- (xi) Work submitted to the contest undergoes a rigorous verification process in order to prove its authenticity, during and after judging, and before announcing the winners. This includes entry checks, an original file manipulation review, fact-checking, and story text checking.
- (xii) In situations for which the judging procedures do not provide, the secretary, in close consultation with the jury chair, the jury coordinator and the programs director, will decide how to proceed. If no agreement can be reached, World Press Photo, in the person of its executive director, will decide on the proper procedure.

E - JUDGING CRITERIA AND REPRESENTATION REQUIREMENT

Judging criteria

The World Press Photo Contest rewards accurate and visually compelling photojournalism and documentary photography of the past year that share a multiplicity of relevant stories and voices.

During their deliberations the jury will consider the following criteria:

- **Visual quality:** this can include creativity, technical skill and visual style, and the edit of the story (where relevant)
- **Story:** this refers to the story and/or issues covered in the photographs, its relevance or significance, and the way in which the photographer has chosen to approach the story
- **Representation:** this refers to the importance of awarding a diverse range of stories and photographers

The categories welcome entries that witness or document news moments, events and/or aftermaths, sports, nature as well as social, political and environmental issues or solutions. An increase in contest winners has been implemented to allow the jury more flexibility in selecting diverse styles and topics, and also give space to include more sports, nature, and uplifting human stories, that the audience has been missing in the past few years. The jury will decide on the appropriate balance per region as they select the winners.

The organization recognizes that the jury comprises a diverse group of industry experts who each bring relevant knowledge of their regions and insight into different aspects of photojournalism and documentary photography. Therefore whilst the organization sets these criteria, it also allows the jury the freedom to determine and define what makes an entry worthy of an award.

Representation requirement

The core motivation behind the regional contest model is to give a platform to more diverse accounts of our world. In order to adequately represent and contextualize stories, World Press Photo will present the jury with relevant information about the photographer in order to facilitate a more comprehensive approach to understanding and judging entries. In doing so, the judging process emphasizes the importance of context and that means acknowledging accountability, transparency and positionality in image-making. The jury is made up of industry professionals who respect the work of each entrant, and have extensive discussions in order to award the best and most insightful work.

During the judging process, information will be made available to the jury at certain stages. To ensure that judging is as fair and efficient as possible, the following information will be given in the respective rounds:

Round 1: No photographer information given.

This is to ensure that the entries progressing to Round 2 are selected for their visual quality.

Round 2 onwards: Information about photographer nationality, where they are based, gender, title and a short caption, all provided by the entrant, will be given.

Round 3 onwards: A long caption given.

A longer caption describing the story context (provided by the entrant) will become available on the judging platform.

Round 4 onwards: Relevant additional information given.

From Round 4 onwards, jury members will be able to discuss additional information relating to how and why the story was made, such as the motivation to work on the project, the type of project (assignment/personal project). This information is requested on entry. Additionally, jurors will gain access to the individual image captions on Stories and Long-Term Projects (provided by the entrant).

The jury members will not be given the photographer's name, or other personal information not listed above, during the judging process. This is to preserve the anonymity of the entrants as much as possible until winners are selected. However, entrants may mistakenly provide their names in the captions, which is unavoidable.

In order to ensure that the jury awards a diverse group of winners, World Press Photo has established the following representation criteria:

- At least one local* winner per region;
- At least one winner identifying as female or non-binary per region.

**A photographer is considered local if they are from the country (and/or community) where the story is being covered – specifically, if they hold that country's nationality or have lived and worked there for at least ten years.*

F - CODE OF ETHICS

Jurors should be aware that entrants are required to accept the photo contest code of ethics as a condition of entry.

World Press Photo Contest Code of Ethics

The World Press Photo Contest rewards the best photojournalism and documentary photography of the past year. The criteria for entries is that they are accurate and visually compelling insights about our world.

World Press Photo connects high-quality and trustworthy non-fiction reporting and storytelling with a global audience – through digital channels, exhibitions, and the yearbook. Millions of people around the world see the winning photographs and stories, often for the first time. Being a global platform gives us the responsibility to present the most accurate and compelling work.

Entrants to the World Press Photo Contest must ensure that all entered material has been created ethically and provides a fair representation of the stories and people photographed. Entrants must comply with the following code of ethics:

1. Must be aware of the influence the photographer's presence can have on a scene they photograph.
2. Must not intend to mislead by recreating or staging events. In certain cases, deliberate reenactments can be acceptable if they serve a clear purpose for the story and/or issue being documented, and the photographer must be transparent about their motivation and process. Any direct influence over the scene, such as reenactments or posed portraits, must be included in the captions.
3. Must ensure that individuals and/or groups photographed are treated with dignity and respect, and that the photographer causes no physical and/or psychological harm, further stigmatization, discrimination or rejection by their local communities, especially when photographing vulnerable individuals and/or groups, and children.
4. Must ensure that consent has been appropriately handled, with consideration for relevant local and international laws and for the ability of an individual to give informed consent, for example when working with vulnerable people and children. Consider whether individuals and/or groups are adequately informed about the potential use and distribution of photographs via publication, and what impact that could have on them. Information about consent should be indicated in the caption.
5. Consider whether measures need to be taken to protect identity especially when photographing vulnerable individuals and/or groups and children—either when photographing or in the caption.

Photographing children and teenagers can be highly sensitive, as they are more vulnerable and not always able to make good judgments for themselves. In these cases, the right to freedom of expression has to be balanced against the rights of the child to privacy and freedom from fear and exploitation.

5.1. Always change the name and obscure the visual identity of any child who is identified as:

- a victim of sexual abuse or exploitation;
- a perpetrator of physical or sexual abuse;
- living with a condition or disease that might stigmatize them, unless the child, and a parent or a guardian gives fully informed consent;
- charged or convicted of a crime, or engaged in or accused of criminal activity.

5.2. In certain circumstances when a child may be subject to the risk or potential risk of harm or retribution, consider changing their name and obscure their visual identity, including in cases when the child is identified as:

- a current or former child combatant;
- an asylum seeker, a refugee or an internally displaced person.

6. Must ensure that independence is upheld and must not pay individuals and/or groups for information or participation, or accept any form of compensation – such as gifts, money or favors—from those who may seek to influence the story.
7. Must ensure that the personal safety of everyone involved – including the photographer, fixers and individuals and/or groups photographed – is appropriately handled. Avoid taking unnecessary risks that can result in dangerous situations.
8. Respect the work of other photographers and do not plagiarize. Consider whether work repeats well-known examples or is distinctive.
9. Must ensure that the content and edit of photographs and stories present an accurate and comprehensive representation of individuals and/or groups. Consider whether graphic and violent photographs are appropriate for the story presented, especially when they involve vulnerable people.
10. Avoid reinforcing stereotypes and be aware of biases that can result in misrepresentation.
11. Ensure captions, and any other textual elements, are accurate.
12. Must be open and transparent about the entire process through which their photographs are made, and are accountable to the World Press Photo organisation for their practice.

World Press Photo's code of ethics is in line with journalistic and documentary practices and standards. The organization reserves the right to seek clarification or explanation should concerns arise during or after the judging process.

G - ENTRY RULES

In order to facilitate a fair entry and judging process, it is important that every entrant reads these entry rules and agrees to them when submitting their entry. These entry rules outline who can enter the contest and what can be entered.

World Press Photo Contest Entry Rules

General Entry Rules

1. The World Press Photo contest is open to professional photographers working in the field of journalism and/or documentary photography. Every entrant needs to provide a document with a valid date that confirms their current professional status. Examples of documents include, but are not limited to:

- press card, stating you are working as a photographer;

OR

- at least 1 proof of publication (for example a tearsheet) from 2024 or 2025, with your name visible as credit, in either online or print format from a recognized media organization or publication;

OR

- journalism union membership card;

OR

- membership document from a recognized photographic association that shows the photographer is a professional member;

OR

- a recent letter of reference (must be from 2024 or 2025) from a photo agency, photo editor, media organization or publication, stating you have worked for them as a photographer;

OR

- If you are not able to provide proof that meets the above criteria, you may register with alternative (multiple) documents so that we can gain a better understanding of your professional status.

We do not consider proof of professional status:

- CVs or cover letters

OR

- diplomas

OR

- samples of photography

The organization reserves the right to ask for additional information to help clarify the entrant's professional status.

2. Team entries of two or more photographers are allowed. Proof of professional status must be provided for each team member.
3. The photographer(s) must be the author(s) of the photographs submitted in their name.
4. The photographer(s), agent or representative entering on their behalf, must be the copyright holder(s) or have been authorized by the copyright holder(s) to submit the photographs.
5. Entries must comply with the categories, as described [here](#). (Page 18)
6. Entries must meet the [technical requirements](#).
7. Photographs can be submitted whether or not they have been published.
8. Photographs taken at restricted events are not accepted (i.e. events where only photographers commissioned by those organizing the event have access, for example photographers commissioned by governments, political parties or corporations).
9. All entries must have accurate captions and descriptions, written in English. If the captions have been translated, please also provide the original caption. Captions must contain all the information described in the [guidance on captions](#).
10. Each entry must include relevant additional information, such as motivation, the type of project (assignment/personal project) and funding.
11. All entries must comply with the World Press Photo Code of Ethics. [Read the Code of Ethics](#).
12. Entries can only be submitted via [Picter](#), the official contest entry platform.
13. The deadline for creating an account on the contest entry platform Picter, completing registration and for submitting entries to the 2026 Contest is Saturday, 17 January 2026, 13.00 Central European Time.
14. Members of the World Press Photo staff, Supervisory Board, International Advisory Committee and 2026 Contest jury are not permitted to enter the 2026 Contest.

Additional entry rules for the Singles, Stories and Long-Term Projects categories

15. A photograph can only be entered once, either as a Single or as part of a Story, or as part of a Long-Term Project.

16. Photographs must not show the name of the photographer, agency, or publication, or any other information (these details can be included in the metadata of the photograph but must not be visible on the photograph itself).
17. Photographs entered into Singles, Stories and Long-Term Projects must comply with our rules on manipulation and must not be altered by adding, rearranging, reversing, distorting or removing people and/or objects from within the frame. Read the rules on manipulation [here](#).
18. Entrants must provide file(s) as recorded by the camera for all images that proceed to the final stages of the contest. These file(s) will be requested and studied confidentially between 26 January and 22 February 2026. Failure to provide these files when requested will lead to the exclusion of the entry.

Rules on the use of AI tools

Singles, Stories, and Long-Term Projects

19. All photographs entered into the Singles, Stories, and Long-Term Projects categories must be made with a camera. No synthetic or artificially generated images are allowed, and no use of artificially generative fill is allowed. Any use of these tools will automatically disqualify the entry from the contest.
20. Smartphone photographs are permitted only when captured in standard shooting mode; submissions created using HDR, portrait mode, creative lighting effects, or panorama mode are not eligible.
21. The use of smart tools, or AI-powered enhancement tools is possible within the contest rules, as long as these tools do not lead to significant changes to the image as a whole, introduce new information to the image, nor remove information from the image that was captured by the camera. Some examples of tools where limited usage may be allowed are Denoise, automatic adjustments (e.g on levels, colors, contrast) and object selection for local adjustments. These are permitted up to a limited extent, which is to be determined by the contest organization and global jury.
22. Tools that do immediately breach the contest rules are all AI-powered enlarging tools such as Adobe Super Resolution and Topaz Photo AI. These tools are based on generative AI models that introduce new information to enlarge and sharpen images.

Terms and Conditions

23. Copyright holders retain copyright of their work. For awarded entries, copyright holders grant World Press Photo unlimited non-exclusive use of high-resolution photographs for

activities in all media, including social media, online and print, in relation to the contest, the exhibition, the yearbook, the public archive, and all promotional and educational activities for and under the auspices of World Press Photo, without any remuneration being due.

24. For all entries except awarded entries, copyright holders grant World Press Photo non-exclusive use of low-resolution photographs in a non-public archive for its educational and research activities, without any remuneration being due.
25. The copyright holders represent and warrant that submission of the entries does not breach any law, and further that no third party can hold any claims or any objections regarding the rights granted to World Press Photo specified in articles 22 and 23. The copyright holders will hold World Press Photo harmless of any claims from third parties related hereto.
26. The Entry Rules and any dispute, proceedings or claim of whatever nature arising out of or in any way relating to the Entry Rules (including any non-contractual disputes or claims), shall be governed by Dutch law.
27. Any dispute arising from the Entry Rules (whether contractual or non-contractual) shall be decided solely and exclusively by the competent court of Amsterdam.
28. The conditions set out in the Entry Rules are binding, and World Press Photo reserves the right to refuse or exclude any entry at its own discretion.

For more information on GDPR and the contest, please click [here](#).

H - CATEGORIES

Each region has three format-based categories: Singles, Stories and Long-Term Projects. These categories welcome entries that witness or document news moments, events and/or aftermaths, as well as sports, nature, portraits and social, political and environmental issues or solutions.

All submitted entries were entered in one of the following categories:

Singles

- Single frame photographs.
- All singles must have been shot in 2025.
- All singles will be eligible for the World Press Photo of the Year.

Stories

- Stories can contain between 4 and 10 single frame photographs.
- All photographs entered into the stories category must have been shot in 2024 or 2025. At least four photographs in a story must have been shot in 2025.
- All photographs shot in 2025 that are included in the story will be eligible for the World Press Photo of the Year.

Long-Term Projects

- Projects on a single theme containing between 24-30 single frame photographs.
- An entry must contain photographs from at least three different years, and a minimum of six photographs must have been shot in 2025.
- All photographs shot in 2025 that are included in the story will be eligible for the World Press Photo of the Year.

I - PRIZES

A total of 42 winners will be awarded; three Singles, three Stories and one Long-Term Project per region (Africa; West, Central, and South Asia; Europe; North and Central America; South America; and Asia-Pacific and Oceania). The World Press Photo of the Year and two runners up are then chosen from all the winning entries.

With the 2025 World Press Photo Contest there has been an increase in award winners. You can read more about the changes to the contest in this [article](#).

Contest winners

Every winner of the contest receives:

- A monetary prize of €1,000
- Inclusion in the annual World Press Photo year-long worldwide exhibition
- Inclusion in the annual collectible yearbook, available in multiple languages with a worldwide distribution of more than 30,000 copies
- Publication in the online collection and a personal profile on World Press Photo's website
- Promotion on World Press Photo's platforms
- Invitation to a winners' event
- A physical award

In addition, winners are often featured in major publications and invited to speak at public events, exhibition openings, and lectures throughout the year.

World Press Photo of the Year

Out of the 42 winning entries, the global jury will choose the World Press Photo of the Year with two runners up. In addition to receiving their winning prize, the World Press Photo of the Year winner will also receive:

- An additional monetary prize of €10,000
- FUJIFILM GFX cameras and lenses that will be awarded to the Photo of the Year winner and two runners up.
- An additional physical award

J - JUDGING ROUNDS

The contest has six voting rounds: the first, second, third, fourth, fifth and the final (POY) round.

(I) Specific responsibilities of each jury

Each of the juries is assigned a specific responsibility in this process:

- a) The six regional juries will judge the first three rounds of all categories of their respective regions until a certain number of entries are left in the contest:
 - +/- 20 Singles
 - +/- 20 Stories
 - +/- 12 Long-Term Projects
- b) The global jury will judge all categories in all regions from the fourth round to the finals, until the winners and the World Press Photo of the Year are selected.
- c) Entries voted out by the regional juries cannot be reintroduced by the global jury.

(II) Round: 1

Categories: all

Jury: regional juries

In round 1, work must only be judged on their visual quality. There is no specific number that the entries have to be reduced to in this round, unless a cap number is specified by the contest organization in advance.

- a) An entry needs at least one vote in order to remain in the contest.
- b) At this stage, caption information and information about the background of the entrant (nationality, where they are based, gender) cannot be consulted yet. This is to ensure that the entries progressing to round 2 are selected for their visual quality only.
- c) If the jury finds a particularly strong entry made in multiple regions that they want to transfer to another region, they will keep it in their region for the time being. After the 3rd round, the entries will be transferred to the proposed regions. Please note that the jury chair of the region it has been proposed to will have a veto on accepting the entry in that region.
- d) At this stage, if a juror wants to promote an individual photograph from a story to the next round, the whole story needs to be promoted. During the round 3 call it will be possible to select singles from Stories and Long-Term Projects voted out and transfer them to the Singles category (when shot in 2025).
- e) There will not be a judging call after round 1, the first call will be after round 2.

(III) Round: 2

Categories: all

Jury: regional juries

The goal of the second round is to reduce the number of entries in Stories and Long-Term Projects to a minimum of 30 and maximum of 45 entries, and in Singles to a minimum of 40 and maximum of 55 entries. At the end of the voting period, a judging call will take place with the regional jury to view the results, discuss and if needed reduce or add entries to reach the appropriate number. Please refer to your jury program for dates and times.

- a) An entry needs at least two votes in order to remain in contest.
- b) From round 2 onward the title and short caption of each entry is available, as well as information about photographer nationality, where they are based, and gender, for the jury to consider during their voting and discussions.
- c) During the call concluding round 2, the jury can request specific information concerning the who, what, when, where or why in an entry, if this is not already stated in the short caption and is crucial for the understanding of the story. At this point, the long caption is not available yet (will be from round 3 onwards). The contest team will look up specific questions in the long caption that the entrant submitted.
- d) Please keep in mind while voting, in order to ensure that the jury awards a diverse group of winners, World Press Photo has established the following representation criteria:
 - At least one local* winner per region;
 - At least one winner identifying as female or non-binary per region.

**Local is considered as a photographer who is from the country (and/or community) in which the story is being covered. This can either mean that they have a nationality, or have been living and working in the country for at least ten years.*
- e) If a juror wants to promote an individual photograph from a story to the next round, the whole story needs to be promoted. During the round 3 call it will be possible to select singles from Stories and Long-Term Projects voted out and transfer them to the Singles category (when shot in 2025).
- f) If the jury finds a particularly strong entry made in multiple regions that they want to transfer to another region, they will keep it in their region for the time being. After round 3, the entries will be transferred to the proposed regions. Please note that the jury chair of the region it has been proposed to will have a veto on accepting the entry in that region.

- g) At the end of the viewing of each category during the judging calls, each jury member may propose and advocate to re-introduce entries that have not been promoted on to the next round. Re-introduction requires at least two votes.
- h) At the end of round 2, a minimum of 30 and a maximum of 45 entries in the Stories and Long-Term Projects category, and a minimum of 40 and maximum of 55 entries in the Singles category must remain in the contest.

(IV) Round: 3

Categories: all

Jury: regional juries

The goal of the third round is to reduce the number of entries to a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 24 entries in the Singles and Stories categories, and to a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 14 in the Long-Term Projects category.

- a) An entry needs at least three votes in order to remain in contest.
- b) From round 3 onwards the long caption, provided by the entrant, specifying the who, what, when, where and why will be available on the judging platform Pictor.
- c) If a Story or Long-Term project has been voted out, individual images that have been taken in 2025 can be transferred into the Singles category with two votes. This takes place during the judging call.
- d) The entries in the Singles category can be viewed by the jury on the judging platform Pictor in their own time, but voting will take place (by a show of hands) in the call concluding round 3 (as Singles may be extracted from other categories during the judging call).
- e) Please keep in mind while voting, in order to ensure that the jury awards a diverse group of winners, World Press Photo has established the following representation criteria:
 - At least one local* winner per region;
 - At least one winner identifying as female or non-binary per region.

**Local is considered as a photographer who is from the country (and/or community) in which the story is being covered. This can either mean that they have a nationality, or have been living and working in the country for at least ten years.*
- f) If the jury finds a particularly strong entry made in multiple regions that they want to transfer to another region, they will keep it in their region for the time being. After the third round, the entries will be transferred to the proposed regions. Please note that the jury chair of the region it has been proposed to will have a veto on accepting the entry in that region.
- g) At the end of round 3, each jury member may propose to re-introduce entries that have not been promoted on to the next round. Re-introduction requires at least three votes.
- h) At the end of round 3 a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 24 entries in the Singles

and Stories categories, and a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 14 in the Long-Term Projects category, must remain in the contest to be transferred to the global jury.

(V) Round: 4

Categories: all

Jury: Global Jury - online

The goal of the fourth round is to reduce the number of entries in the judged category to a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 9 entries. The regional jury chairs will be joined by the global chair and an independent jury secretary from this round onwards.

- a) After all regional juries are complete, the global jury will gain access to the entries remaining in each category across the regions on the judging platform Pictor. It is important that the global jury and chair take time to preview all the entries before round 4 begins.
- b) An entry needs at least four votes in order to remain in the contest.
- c) The global jury will begin each region with a preview, voting will be conducted during the calls via a show of hands facilitated by the jury secretary.
- d) The round 4 judging call starts with a round of positive voting per category. If after the round of positive voting a minimum of eight up to a maximum of nine entries remain, the fourth round is complete for that category.

If fewer than eight entries remain, the jury will hold another round of positive voting, on only those entries taken out of contest by the previous round of voting.

If more than nine entries remain, the jury will revert to a negative vote on the entries still in contest. Discussions can take place before and after each voting round.

Alternating between positive and negative voting will continue until there are a minimum of eight up to a maximum of nine entries left.

Note: positive voting means it requires four votes from the jury to keep an entry in the contest. Negative voting means it requires four votes from the jury to take an entry out of the contest.

- e) In addition to the short and long caption, individual photo captions in the Stories and Long-Term Project categories, provided by the entrant, will become available on the judging platform Pictor.
- f) From round 4 onwards, additional information relating to how and why the story was made, such as motivation, the type of project (assignment/personal project) and funding, will become available for jury members to discuss.

- g) Please keep in mind while voting, in order to ensure that the jury awards a diverse group of winners, World Press Photo has established the following representation criteria:
- At least one local* winner per region;
 - At least one winner identifying as female or non-binary per region.
**A photographer is considered local if they are from the country (and/or community) where the story is being covered – specifically, if they hold that country's nationality or have lived and worked there for at least ten years.*
- h) If the jury finds a particularly strong entry made in multiple regions that they want to transfer to another region, the jury may transfer an entry to a different region with four votes, including the vote of the chair of the region the entry will be moved to.
- i) If a Story or Long-Term Project has been voted out, individual images that have been taken in 2025 can be transferred into the Singles category with three votes.
- j) At the end of the round jury members may propose to re-introduce entries that have not been promoted to the next round. Re-introduction requires at least four votes.

(VI) Round: 5 (finals)

Categories: all

Jury: Global Jury - Amsterdam

The fifth round takes place in Amsterdam with the global jury present. The goal of this round is to select the contest winners. 3 winners per Singles and Stories and 1 Long-Term Project winner will be selected in every region. This process takes up to 3 days.

- a) Before the round begins, the global jury will be presented with the findings of the image forensic process for all the entries remaining in the contest. During this presentation the jury may be asked to discuss and make decisions on specific entries. Please refer to the forensic process on page 36 of this document for more.
- b) The round will begin with a preview of the entries still in the contest. All finalists are presented and the jury is given time to discuss the choices made and to check whether themes, balance of documentary and news, and quality of finalists are in balance.
- c) In order to ensure that the jury awards a diverse group of winners, World Press Photo has established the following representation criteria:
 - At least one local* winner per region;
 - At least one winner identifying as female or non-binary per region.

**Local is considered as a photographer who is from the country (and/or community) in which the story is being covered. This can either mean that they have a nationality, or have been living and working in the country for at least ten years.*
- d) From round 5 on, the contest switches to reference prints of all the photography in the finals. The screen will still be used for previews of each region and if the jury requests it.
- e) An entry needs at least five votes in order to become a winner.
- f) The winners will be determined region by region. Round 5 starts with a round of positive voting facilitated by the jury secretary. If after the first round of voting (for Singles and Stories) three entries remain, the winners for that region are determined. The same process applies to Long-Term Projects, except only one entry needs to remain.

If fewer than the necessary entries remain, the jury will hold another round of positive voting, on only those entries taken out of contest by the previous round of voting.

If more than the necessary entries remain, the jury will revert to a negative vote on the entries still in the contest.

Alternating between positive and negative voting will continue until there are three entries for Singles and Stories, and one entry for Long Term Projects left per region. Discussions can take place between voting rounds.

Note: positive voting means it requires five votes from the jury to keep an entry in the contest. Negative voting means it requires five votes from the jury to take an entry out of the contest.

After three rounds of voting that leads to fewer or more than the necessary entries, the vote will be decided by a simple majority of four votes.

- g) The jury secretary will declare the results to the jury and contest organization.
- h) The short and long caption provided by the entrant, specifying the who, what, when, where and why in an entry will be available and read aloud by the contest team.
- i) Additional information relating to how and why the story was made, such as motivation, the type of project (assignment/personal project) and funding, will be available for jury members to discuss.
- j) In categories/regions where the finals have not taken place yet; if the jury finds a particularly strong entry made in multiple regions that they want to transfer to another region, the jury may transfer an entry to a different region with five votes, including the vote of the chair of the region the entry will be moved to.
- k) If a Story or Long-Term Project has been voted out, individual images that have been taken in 2025 can be transferred into the Singles category with four votes.
- l) The reversal of the jury's decision after winners have been chosen in the final round can occur by a supermajority of 5 votes. This may take place up until the final round that selects the World Press Photo of the Year winner.

K - PHOTO OF THE YEAR SELECTION

The World Press Photo of the Year and two runners up are selected after the jury has determined all contest winners. Any photograph taken in the contest year (2025) is eligible for this prize. This process takes up to two days.

The World Press Photo of the Year honors a visually creative and skillfully made photograph that documents and represents an important event, moment or issue of 2025.

During their deliberations the jury will consider the following criteria:

- **Visual quality:** this can include creativity, technical skill and visual style of the photograph/s being deliberated.
- **Story:** this refers to the story and/or issues covered in the photograph, its relevance or significance, and the way in which the photographer has chosen to approach the story

In order to ensure that the jury awards a diverse group of global winners, World Press Photo has established the following representation criteria for the Photo of the Year and runners-up:

- At least one local* winner;
- At least one winner identifying as female or non-binary.
**Local is considered as a photographer who is from the country (and/or community) in which the story is being covered. This can either mean that they have a nationality, or have been living and working in the country for at least ten years.*

The Photo of the Year and runners up are decided according to the following process:

- a) The jury will begin with a preview of the 42 contest winners they have selected in the previous round. The contest organization will confirm and lock in the winners after this final preview.
- b) Individual jury members will then have the opportunity to propose photographs for the Photo of the Year by placing stickers next to the reference prints on display. All photographs taken in 2025 in all categories will be eligible. These photographs will be printed on A4 for the final voting process.
- c) After deliberations, the proposed photographs will enter a round of voting to reduce them to 5 finalists. This starts with a round of positive voting facilitated by the jury secretary. A photograph needs at least five votes in order to continue. If after the first round of voting five photographs remain, the jury will move to the next steps.

If fewer than five photographs remain, the jury will hold another round of positive voting, on only those photos taken out of contest by the previous round of voting.

If more than five photographs remain, the jury will revert to a negative vote on the entries still in the contest.

Alternating between positive and negative voting will continue until there are five photographs left.

Note: positive voting means it requires five votes from the jury to keep an entry in the contest. Negative voting means it requires five votes from the jury to take an entry out of the contest.

After three rounds of voting that leads to fewer or more than five photographs, the vote will be decided by a simple majority of four votes.

- d) Once 5 finalists are selected, the jury will continue voting in the same manner to reduce the finalists to the top 3. These three photographs constitute the World Press Photo of the Year and two runners-up.
- e) Another round/s of voting will then bring the photos down to the top two.
- f) Once the two finalists for the Photo of the Year have been selected, the jury will switch to a secret ballot to vote for photograph A or photograph B. If A or B receives 5 votes, this photograph is thereby determined World Press Photo of the Year. After three rounds of voting that lead to fewer than five votes, the vote will be decided by a simple majority of four votes.
- g) After the results of the voting have been announced to the jury, the vote can be reopened with a unanimous vote of the jury. In this case, each juror may re-introduce a maximum of one photograph and the judging will be restarted and be revoted according to procedure.

L - VERIFICATION PROCESS

The World Press Photo Contest has a verification process with four elements to ensure compliance with its code of ethics and entry rules.

(I) Manipulation review for Single, Stories and Long-Term Project entries

Entry rule 17 states photographs “must not be altered by adding, rearranging, reversing, distorting or removing people and/or objects from within the frame.” For full details please see the entry rules on manipulation on the [what counts as manipulation page](#) which describes and shows what alterations to the content of a photograph are not acceptable.

There are two exceptions to this: (i) cropping that removes extraneous details is permitted; (ii) sensor dust or scratches on scans of negatives can be removed.

The process for ensuring compliance with this rule takes place later in the judging process. Entrants whose photographs remain in the contest and are eligible to progress are contacted between 07 - 22 January 2026 and required to provide the file as recorded by the camera. These files could be:

- Original RAW file(s) as recorded by the camera (only 1 frame per contest image is required)
OR
- Full format JPEG file(s). These must be as delivered by the camera, and provided in a series showing at least seven frames (three frames before the contest entry, the frame of the actual contest entry, and three frames after the contest entry)
OR
- For smartphones, the unedited photograph emailed directly from the phone to contest@worldpressphoto.org and provided in a series showing at least seven frames (three frames before the contest entry, the frame of the actual contest image, and three frames after the contest image)
OR
- Unprocessed, unedited positive scans of film negative(s), plus a contact sheet of a series showing at least seven frames (three frames before the contest entry, the frame of the actual contest entry, and three frames after the contest entry).

Failure to provide these files will lead to the elimination of the entry, making it ineligible for a possible award.

Two independent digital analysts compare original files with contest entries to determine whether the content of any photograph (either a single photograph or frame in a story) has been altered.

The exact process of the manipulation review for the jury is detailed in appendix 2 and 3.

(II) Fact-checking

Once the winners are chosen, an external research team will check the context in which each image or story was produced, distributed and/or published. This could include (but is not limited to): if the persons named in the caption are in the photo; if a news event can be confirmed to have taken place; if an animal is depicted, is the correct species named; is the location accurate; is the date correct; etc.

The fact-checking process will be where clause 2 of the code of ethics (that entrants “must not intend to mislead by recreating or staging events”) is handled. Captions must explain the circumstances in which a photograph was taken. If the photographer influenced the scene in any way, or gave directions to a subject to pose in any way for a portrait, this must be disclosed in the caption.

(III) Story text

Once the jury has selected the winners, the external research team gathers background information on each photograph and story. While we rely on the photographers for the basic captions, which are edited for accuracy and clarity, we often need additional information. This is so we can provide – in the yearbook, exhibition and on the website – the full story that gives the context for each photograph and story. World Press Photo is responsible for the content of this text. If required information is missing or incorrect, photographers will be contacted and asked to provide the correct information. Winning photographers are asked to fact check the captions and story descriptions before they are published.

M - PROCESS FOR ISSUES ARISING AFTER PRIZES HAVE BEEN AWARDED

From the conclusion of the 2026 Contest onwards, if, at any time after a winner is announced, an entry is alleged to have broken one or more of the entry rules, or contravened the code of ethics, or an entrant has allegedly engaged in discrimination or harassment, the allegation will be considered.

The process for determining the status of an award in these circumstances is as follows:

- (i) The allegations must be presented to World Press Photo, in the person of the executive director, in a written statement containing supporting evidence. The executive director can seek legal and other advice, and will determine whether the allegation warrants either an investigation or a decision. World Press Photo, in the person of the executive director, can also initiate an investigation.
- (ii) If an investigation is considered necessary by World Press Photo, the organization will convene an independent fact-checking team and ask it to conduct an investigation of those allegations, and present the foundation, in the person of the executive director, a written report.
- (iii) A post-award review panel will be convened, comprising four members - the executive director of the World Press Photo Foundation, the chair of the global jury, the chair of the regional jury the award was won in, and a lawyer specialized in the field of the allegation to review the case.
- (iv) The post-award review panel must reach a unanimous decision on whether or not the winner should be disqualified.
- (v) In the event the post-award review panel cannot reach a unanimous decision, World Press Photo, in the person of the executive director, will decide whether or not the entry should be disqualified.
- (vi) Once a decision has been reached, World Press Photo will publish a statement on the investigation and the decision.

If a winner is disqualified, the award will be revoked and the entry will be removed from the World Press Photo website and if applicable from other output.

APPENDIX 1 - CAPTION GUIDANCE

Jurors should be aware that entrants are required to provide accurate captions.

This is the guidance provided to entrants on what information has to be in a caption:

Captions must be accurate and answer the five basic questions of good journalism (who, what, where, when, why). All entries must have accurate captions and descriptions, written in English. If the captions have been translated, please also provide the caption in the original language.

The short project description (short caption) must:

- Describe who is in the photograph(s) and what is going on within the photograph(s) and/or project.
- Name the city, region or state, and country where the photograph(s) and/or project was made.
- Provide the date the photograph(s) and/or project was made.
- Captions must give attribution for actions not seen (e.g., the scene of an accident where more than 10 died, according to police).

The long description (long caption) is used to give context to the news event or describe why the photograph(s) and/or project is significant. Any information that is included must be sourced.

The long description must also explain the circumstances in which a photograph was taken. If the photographer influenced the scene in any way, or gave directions to a subject to pose in any way for a portrait, this must be disclosed. Information about consent should be indicated in the caption as stated in article 4 of the [code of ethics](#).

Additional information

As well as information provided in the form of captions, entrants are also required to provide relevant additional information relating to how and why the story was made, such as motivation, the type of project (assignment/personal project) and funding. This information is collected on entry and will be given to the jury from Round 4 onwards. Entrants may be contacted during the judging process if the jury have questions about their additional information.

APPENDIX 2 - MANIPULATION GUIDANCE

Many things can count as manipulation in photography, but for the World Press Photo Contest, the Code of Ethics and Entry Rules focus on two important issues. Entrants are advised about these criteria when they submit their photographs.

Entry rules on manipulation

The following information is applicable for the Singles, Stories and Long-Term Projects categories.

Only single frame, single exposure photographs will be accepted. The following are not accepted:

- Multiple exposures, polyptychs (diptychs, triptychs, and so forth).
- Stitched panoramas, either produced in-camera or with image editing software.

The content of a photograph must not be altered by adding, rearranging, reversing, distorting or removing people and/or objects from within the frame. There are two exceptions:

- (i) Cropping that removes extraneous details is permitted;
- (ii) Removing sensor dust or scratches on scans of negatives is permitted.

Adjustments of color or conversion to grayscale that do not alter content are permitted, with two exceptions:

- (i) Changes in color may not result in significant changes in hue, to such an extent that the processed colors diverge from the original colors.
- (ii) Changes in density, contrast, luminosity, color and/or saturation levels that significantly alter content by obscuring or eliminating information in the photograph are not permitted. The jury determines which changes are significant, following the video guidance below on what counts as manipulation.

See below for details on what is, or is not, acceptable.

1. The first thing that counts as manipulation is intending to mislead by staging events.

The code of ethics says photographers must not intend to mislead by recreating or staging events. In certain cases, deliberate reenactments can be acceptable if they serve a clear purpose for the story and/or issue being documented, and the photographer must be transparent about their motivation and process. Any direct influence over the scene, such as reenactments or posed portraits, must be included in the captions.

- Staging means arranging something in order to mislead the audience.
- Setting-up or recreating a scene means directing the individuals and/or groups being photographed to do things, or asking them to repeat things they were doing prior to the photographer's arrival.

Staging and recreating events are different from deliberate reenactments and posing for

portraits. Portraits are a special genre of photography. They are made through a relationship between the subject and the photographer in which the subject poses for the photographer. However, for the contest, portraits must not present subjects doing things they would not ordinarily do. Portraits must not mislead viewers by faking a scene, meaning they cannot present scenes that appear as something other than they are.

For any portrait, whether entered as a single or as part of a story, directions given to a subject must be disclosed in the caption. Portraits are subject to the same rules on manipulation stated in the entry rules. This means, for example, the face and body of the subject(s) cannot be altered through the addition or removal of physical marks.

2. Also counted as manipulation is adding or removing content from a photograph, significant processing that can lead to changes in the nature of the photograph, and any use of generative AI

It is important to note that processing by itself is not manipulation, therefore adjustments of color or conversion to grayscale that do not alter content are permitted.

Visual examples are provided on the [website](#).

There are two types of color adjustment that count as manipulation:

- Changes in color may not result in significant changes in hue, to such an extent that the processed colors diverge from the original colors.
- Changes in density, contrast, luminosity, color and/or saturation levels that significantly alter content by obscuring or eliminating elements in the photograph are not permitted.

The jury determines which changes are significant, following the video guidance (provided on our [website](#)) on what counts as manipulation.

Altering the content of a photograph by “adding, rearranging, reversing, distorting or removing people and/or objects from within the frame” is manipulation and makes an entry ineligible for an award.

The examples given here come from alterations in previous contests. They do not specify every imaginable form of manipulation. Alterations that count as manipulation include, but are not limited to, the following.

It is not acceptable to remove things such as:

- physical marks on body
- small objects in the photograph
- reflected light spots
- shadows
- extraneous items on photograph's border that could not be removed by crop

Visual examples are provided on the [website](#).

It is not acceptable to add things. This includes, but is not limited, to:

- cloning in highlights, enhancing body, or costume size
- painting in object details
- photo montage
- replicating material on the border of a photograph to make a neat crop possible.

Visual examples of altering content of a photograph are provided on our [website](#).

3. Rules on the use of AI tools

All photographs entered into the Singles, Stories and Long-Term Projects categories must be made with a camera. No synthetic or artificially generated images are allowed, and no use of artificially generative fill is allowed. Any use of these tools will automatically disqualify the entry from the contest.

Smartphone photographs are permitted only when captured in standard shooting mode; submissions created using HDR, portrait mode, creative lighting effects, or panorama mode are not eligible.

However, the use of smart tools, or AI-powered enhancement tools is possible within the contest rules, as long as these tools do not lead to significant changes to the image as a whole, introduce new information to the image, nor remove information from the image that was captured by the camera.

Some examples of tools where limited usage may be allowed are Denoise, automatic adjustments (e.g on levels, colors, contrast) and object selection for local adjustments. These are permitted up to a certain extent, which is to be determined by the contest organization and global jury.

Tools that do immediately breach the contest rules are all AI-powered enlarging tools such as Adobe Super Resolution and Topaz Photo AI. These tools are based on generative AI models that introduce new information to enlarge and sharpen images.

4. The consequences of detecting manipulation in an entry.

Entries that have been identified during the verification process as having content altered by adding, rearranging, reversing, distorting or removing people and/or objects from within the frame, will be excluded by the organization.

Entries that have been identified during the verification process as having content altered through changes in color (resulting in significant changes in hue, to such an extent that the processed colors diverge from the original colors), or changes in density, contrast, color and/or

saturation levels that significantly alter content (by obscuring or eliminating information in the picture), will be presented to the global jury for discussion. The global jury will decide on whether the entry remains in the contest or is excluded. If the jury decides to exclude a photograph that is part of a story or long-term project, the remaining photographs in the story that are free from manipulation and taken in the contest year can be transferred to the Singles category.

If during the verification process the forensic experts have technical questions, entrants will be emailed. Once contacted, entrants have 24 hours to respond. The entrant will be informed of the final decision after the winners have been announced.

APPENDIX 3 - MANIPULATION REVIEW

- a) The manipulation review will be conducted by two independent forensic analysts retained by the World Press Photo Foundation.
- b) The workflow of the analysts is described on the World Press Photo website [here](#).
- c) Entrants are contacted and required to provide file(s) as recorded by the camera for their entry. If entrants can not or do not provide these files, their entry will be ineligible for a possible award.
- d) After following the workflow, the analysts present a technical report to the jury identifying which, if any, photographs have had content altered, noting the details of the alterations.
- e) Entries that have been identified during the verification process as having content altered by adding, rearranging, reversing, distorting or removing people and/or objects from within the frame, will be excluded by the organization.
- f) Entries that have been identified during the verification process as having content altered through changes in color (resulting in significant changes in hue, to such an extent that the processed colors diverge from the original colors), or changes in density, contrast, color and/or saturation levels that significantly alter content (by obscuring or eliminating information in the picture), will be presented to the global jury for discussion. The global jury will decide on whether the entry remains in the contest or is excluded. If the jury decides to exclude a photograph that is part of a story or long-term project, the remaining photographs in the story that are free from manipulation and taken in the contest year can be transferred to the Singles category.
- g) If during the verification process the forensic experts have technical questions, entrants will be emailed. Once contacted, entrants have 24 hours to respond. The entrant will be informed of the final decision after the winners have been announced.