



**EDELSTAM  
FOUNDATION**  
THE EDELSTAM PRIZE

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **THE EDELSTAM PRIZE 2026 OPENS THE CALL FOR NOMINATIONS**

*Today the Edelstam Foundation announces the opening of their Call for Nominations for the Edelstam Prize 2026. The nomination is open and candidates may be submitted by anyone. The Edelstam Prize is awarded every second year for outstanding contributions and exceptional courage in standing up for one's beliefs in the Defence of Human Rights. The laureate will be awarded during a ceremony on December 3<sup>rd</sup> at the House of Nobility in Stockholm.*



*Photo text: The Edelstam Prize 2024 was awarded to Mr. Dawit Isaak for his outstanding courage and commitment to freedom of expression and human rights. As the world's longest-held detained journalist, he has been imprisoned in Eritrea for 25 years and could not receive the prize in person; his daughter Bettehem Isaak accepted it on his behalf. Previous laureates include, among others, Mrs. Bahareh Hedayat from Iran (2012), Judge Juan Guzmán from Chile (2016), and Mrs. Li Wenzu from China (2018). Photo credit: Arne Hyckenberg / The Edelstam Foundation, Mr. Dawit Isaak, private.*

**NOMINATE A CANDIDATE:** <https://www.edelstam.org/the-edelstam-prize/nominate-a-candidate/>

"In situations of widespread violations of human rights, those who are willing to risk their personal safety to defend the rights of others, not only save lives, but most importantly preserve for all of us the essential value of human dignity," says Lise Bergh, Chair of the Edelstam Prize Nomination Committee.

From February 2<sup>nd</sup> until June 30<sup>th</sup> 2026 it is possible to nominate candidates for the Edelstam Prize 2026. The Nomination Committee plays an important role in finding potential candidates through their networks around the world. However, it is an "open nomination," that is to say, anyone can nominate a candidate. The Nomination Committee will then present 5-15 candidates to the Edelstam Prize Jury who then will select a laureate.

"We want to award those who have the courage to stand up for their convictions, the courage to act in order to defend the rights and safety of others even when it involves a personal risk, even when they face threats of powerful opponents, and it is not easily mobilized. The everyday heroes are the human right defenders, the activists and whistle blowers all over the world; those who risk their future, and maybe their families' safety to fight for the rights of others," says Caroline Edelstam, Chair of the Edelstam Prize Jury.

### **The Edelstam Prize**

The Edelstam Prize is a Sweden-based international monetary award, administrated by the Harald Edelstam Foundation. The Edelstam Prize is awarded for outstanding contributions and exceptional courage in standing up for one's beliefs in the Defence of Human Rights.

The Edelstam Prize is named after, and awarded in the memory of, the Swedish diplomat and Ambassador, Harald Edelstam (1913-1989). Harald Edelstam distinguished himself as diplomat by his professional competence, his bravery and his civic courage in the fight for Human Rights. He was an early proponent and symbol of what is today known as the "Responsibility to Protect" and his memorable acts contributed to save more than a thousand lives.

The winner of the Edelstam Prize can be a private person or a person who serves in Government, international or national organisations. The winner shall be an individual who has acted in Ambassador Harald Edelstam's spirit in a country/countries where Human Rights, according to international law, have been violated. The laureate must have shown outstanding capabilities in analysing and handling complex situations and in finding ways, even unconventional and creative ones, to defend Human Rights. The candidate has, presumably in a complex situation, been able to take a decisive role in helping threatened people or directly saving human lives. Civic courage is a central parameter in the selection of the successful candidate.

### **The Nomination Committee**

The Nomination Committee is chaired by **Mrs. Lise Bergh**, former General Secretary of Amnesty Sweden and former President of Save the Children Sweden, and on the Committee are also **Mr. Thomas Hammarberg**, former Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, **Deputy Tucapel Jiménez**, former member of the Chilean Chamber of Deputies' Commission for Human Rights, **Ambassador Bruno Stagno Ugarte**, Deputy Executive Director for Advocacy at Human Rights Watch and Costa Rica's former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador to the United Nations, and **Mr. Lee Cheuk-yan**, who is the General Secretary of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions, and the chairman of Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China. On the committee is also **Ms. Parul Sharma**, Principal of The Academy for Human Rights in Business at CSR Sweden, a human rights lawyer with extensive experience in CSR issues in so-called high-risk countries, **Ambassador Emilio Barbarani**, diplomat, author and human rights defender, and **Mr. Stuart Russel**, human rights lawyer and Co- Chair of the Monitoring Committee on Attacks on Lawyers of the International Association of People's Lawyers (IAPL), **Mr. Burak Batuhan Karakus**, international human rights lawyer specializing in transnational repression and rule-of-law accountability, and **Ms. Inger Ashing**, Chief Executive Officer of Save the Children International.

### **The Jury**

The international jury is chaired by **Ms. Caroline Edelstam**, Harald Edelstam's granddaughter and co-founder of the Edelstam Foundation. The 2003 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, **Judge Shirin Ebadi** represents Asia; Africa is represented by former Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), **Dr. Fatou Bensouda**, Ambassador **Eileen Donahoe**, Executive Director of Global Digital Policy Incubator at Stanford University's Center for Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law and former US Ambassador to UN Human Rights Council represents North America. **Professor Philip Alston**, UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, represents Oceania, and Europe is represented by **Judge Baltasar Garzón**, who served on Spain's central criminal court, who is known for having indicted the Chilean dictator, General Augusto Pinochet for the deaths and torture of thousands of victims from Chile and other countries.

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