

WORLD PRESS PHOTO



Exhibition 2026

Guided Tour


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2026 World Press Photo Exhibition Guided Tour

Understanding the Stories that Matter

Introduction to World Press Photo

Founded in 1955, World Press Photo is an independent, non-profit foundation based in the Netherlands. Committed to supporting and promoting photojournalism and documentary photography on the global stage, the organization connects the world to the stories that matter through a variety of platforms and initiatives.

For over 70 years, World Press Photo has organized the largest and most prestigious annual press photography contest. Drawn from thousands of international submissions, selected photographs are showcased in an exhibition every year that travels to over 60 cities in more than 40 countries. More than a million visitors see the exhibition worldwide. World Press Photo also manages a thoughtful program of thematic exhibitions that highlight important issues, such as human rights, migration, and gender equality.

The organization closely monitors recent developments in photojournalism. Through a range of educational programs—including masterclasses, workshops, seminars, and public events—World Press Photo creates opportunities for instruction, dialogue, and exchange among photography professionals and the public. The foundation serves as a vital platform for photojournalism and as an important resource for the international photography community.

What is a guided tour?

A guided tour is a structured journey in which a person leads a group of people through an exhibition. The primary goal of the tour is to enhance the visitors' experience and understanding of the exhibition by providing context and encouraging close looking.

The tour guide should provide information about selected projects in the exhibition, underscoring their relationship to the main theme surrounding the 2026 Exhibition: the main events of 2025, current important topics in the media, such as the climate crisis, press freedom, and more.

The tour can also provide space for questions and dialogue. It is not necessary to speak about every project; visitors to the exhibition can be encouraged to look at works that may not be covered in a tour. You can pick and choose the information that feels relevant to share with a tour group.

Before giving a tour, we recommend choosing projects that you find interesting, that you would be comfortable talking about, that would be appropriate for your group, and that reflect the diverse themes and ideas in the exhibition.

Tips on giving a tour

- Familiarize yourself with a selection of photos you wish to talk about in advance to facilitate a more efficient, thoughtful tour.
- Outline your tour. Make notes and create talking points. Feel free to use notes as you go if it's helpful. And don't forget to practice—it will help to determine your pace and establish a natural rhythm for how you describe each project.
- Before you begin the tour, it's good to introduce yourself and invite the visitors to ask questions throughout the tour. Always start with a short intro about the exhibition and the World Press Photo Foundation.
- It's also good to mention that you will be showing a selection of photos, rather than every single image. Indicate to visitors that you will be guiding them or asking them to follow you, so they know what to expect. Encourage visitors to explore the rest of the exhibition on their own.
- For a tour of 30-45 minutes, we expect that devoting about 4-5 minutes to each project and reserving 5 minutes for opening remarks, should be sufficient. Again, it may be useful to practice so that you have a sense of how much time you will need for your tour; you may have to cut out projects depending on how much time the tour takes you.
- Introduce short breaks between the projects you discuss, allowing time and space for the audience to look at the pictures, ask questions, and reflect.
- We highly recommend that you customize your tour and include the works that you feel most comfortable speaking about with your visitors.
- Choose a route/order that best fits with the photographs you want to highlight.
- The tour should highlight specific projects, which will allow you to focus on certain discussion points and explore predetermined themes. The tour can be adjusted according to your preferences and knowledge of the projects.

Below are some suggestions for how to organize a 30 to 40-minute focused tour designed for either student groups (age 10+) or a general audience. The way the exhibition is organized depends on the venue and the possibilities of each exhibition space. Thus, the tours can be organized in different ways.

Sample tours

Thematic Tours

Environmental and Climate Crisis

If you want to add focus to the **environmental and climate crisis**, we recommend these projects:

- Polar Bear on Sperm Whale, by Roie Galitz
- Burned Land, Brais Lorenzo
- Los Angeles on Fire, by Ethan Swope
- Wedding in the Flood by Aaron Favila
- Mexico, A Changing Climate, by César Rodríguez

Care, Community, and Health

If you want to focus on **care, community, and health**, we recommend these projects:

- Moon Dust, by Mohamed Mahdy
- Name the Absence, Ferley A. Ospina
- Emma the Social Robot, by Paula Hornickel
- Motherhood at 60, Wu Fang

Police Brutality, War, and Conflict

If you want to focus on **police brutality, war, and conflict**, we recommend these projects:

- ICE Arrests at New York Court, Carol Guzy
- Those Who Carry the Dead, Eduardo Anizelli
- Sudan's War: A Nation Trapped, by Abdulmonam Eassa
- Drone Wars, by David Guttenfelder
- A Daughter's Grief in Kashmir, Yasir Iqbal
- Witnessing Gaza, Saher Alghorra

Sample tours

Resilience Tour: Visions of Hope

This exhibition reflects the complex and often challenging realities of our times. At the same time it also brings forward stories of human resilience, solidarity, and hope that coexist alongside those difficulties. You will encounter moments of care, strength, and connection that speak to the enduring capacity of individuals and communities to navigate adversity; uplifting stories that inspire strength and connection in a context of widespread media fatigue. Our audiences often tell us that they want to stay engaged with the world, but through narratives that illuminate rather than overwhelm. Below we highlight eight projects that demonstrate stories of resilience and hope.

- A Territory of Hope, by Priscila Ribeiro
- Joburg Ballet School, by Ihsaan Haffejee
- Mountain Resident of Wanglang, by Rob G. Green
- Wedding in the Flood by Aaron Favila
- Farīsāt: Gunpowder's Daughters, by Chantal Pinzi
- Manacillos: A Return to Life, by Ever Andrés Mercado Puentes
- Hijacked Education, by Diego Ibarra Sánchez
- Motherhood at 60, by Wu Fang

Learn from the Jury

We asked the 2026 World Press Photo Contest jury, why do we need stories of resilience, hope, and positive change? Here's what they had to say:

We need access to all kinds of stories. Photojournalism also magnifies intimate, local realities, amplifying voices of resilience and resistance. What affects us personally moves us to act – the personal is universal.

— Silvia Omedes, Europe jury

People and communities are more than trauma. Stories of resilience and hope restore dignity and agency, revealing how people resist, care, and imagine futures beyond crisis, even within systems shaped by inequality and violence.

— Karla Gachet Vega, South America jury

Stories of resilience, hope, and positive change inspire and connect us. They remind us of human strength, showing that even in hardship, people can overcome, grow, and create meaningful transformation.

— Alfred Yaghobzadeh, West, Central, and South Asia jury

Audio Guide

Listen to our free audio guide to help you prepare.



Visual Literacy

Our [Visual Thinking Guide for Facilitators](#) and [Visual Thinking Guide for Visitors](#) were designed to help facilitate conversations around the World Press Photo Exhibition 2026. It provides context to the exhibition and practical thinking routines that help visitors look closely, consider multiple perspectives, and reflect on their role as consumers of images.

For further insights, you can access our comprehensive educational resource on visual literacy, [See the Story](#). This guide includes critical questions designed to foster reflection and stimulate discussion during your guided tours.

Along this guide we will lead you to some of the thematic sections within See the Story to enhance your tour and discussions.

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Africa



Joburg Ballet School *Ihsaan Haffejee*

South Africa
for GroundUp

Joburg Ballet School

Ihsaan Haffejee

Photographer

- Ihsaan Haffejee is a photojournalist and documentary filmmaker based in Johannesburg, South Africa.
- His works have been widely recognised for reporting on social injustices and human rights issues. His works have also been published by GroundUp, Reuters, and *The New York Times*, among others.
- He is a member of the African Photojournalism database and has covered major global events throughout his career, such as the death of Nelson Mandela, the release of Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva from prison, and many more.

Context

- During the apartheid regime of South Africa, ballet was preserved for white communities and was systematically inaccessible to Black communities.
- [The Joburg Ballet School has offered ballet training to children](#) from disadvantaged backgrounds since 2016, with 250 children enrolled each year. The school operates in three townships around Johannesburg, including Soweto, Alexandra, and Braamfontein.
- Through subsidised training, young dancers in places like Soweto are not only learning an art form but also redefining cultural boundaries, fulfilling dreams their parents once thought impossible.
- Through subsidised training, young dancers are not only learning an art form but also redefining cultural boundaries.
- The school offers these children opportunities that their parents never thought possible.

Jury Notes

- This image captures a quiet and intimate moment of preparation among young ballerinas in Soweto, South Africa. The strong use of colour, light, and lines reveals a sense of tranquillity 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.

Visual Thinking: Why do we need stories of resilience, hope, and positive change?
See page 52 of See the Story 2026



When Giants Fall

Halden Krog

South Africa

When Giants Fall

Halden Krog

Photographer

- Halden Krog is an independent photographer based in Cape Town, South Africa.
- He began his career in 1999, and since 2014, Krog has worked as a freelance photographer, and his photographs have appeared in *The Daily Mail*, *The Times*, *Paris Match*, and *Time Magazine*.
- He is a member of the African Photojournalism Database, a directory of emerging and professional African visual journalists.
- His works earned multiple awards, such as the South African Fujifi Im Press Photo Award and the CNN African Photographer of the Year award.

Context

- Zimbabwe is home to the second-largest elephant population in the world, , where the number of elephants exceeds the land that can sustain them and their growing numbers.
- The large elephant population has devastated habitats of other species, and hindered regeneration.
- The land density and drought have furthermore intensified the human-elephant conflict, which drives elephants into populated areas in search of food and water.
- The [Zimbabwean government decided in 2025 to cull 50 elephants](#) in the [Save Valley Conservancy](#), which is home to three times more elephants than the habitat can sustain.
- The government says the [culling of elephants is also helping overall food security](#), as the animals' meat is distributed across communities.
- Many wildlife organisations suggest that culling traumatises surviving animal structures, increasing elephants' aggression towards humans.
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- Many wildlife organisations suggest that culling traumatises surviving animal structures, increasing elephants' aggression towards humans.
- Regarding food security, conservation groups also argue that [bushmeat consumption can pose health risks by transmitting diseases](#).
- The conservancy also attempted to relocate elephants to other reserves in the past, but funding efforts remained fragile.



When Giants Fall

Halden Krog

Jury Notes

- The jury commented on how the culling of an elephant family presents a shocking and unsettling scene, compelling viewers to know more information.
- They also said how the confrontation with the reality of wildlife conservation sheds light on complex tensions between conservation, local livelihoods, and human–animal conflict.
- The photograph highlights an important issue on the continent, expanding the narrative beyond conflicts associated with the region.

Visual Thinking: Do we need to see graphic imagery to understand what is happening in the world? See page 33 of See the story 2026; Climate crisis: page 39 of See the Story 2026



Children Who Do Not Exist

Kiana Hayeri

Iran/Canda
for *The New York Times*

Children Who Do Not Exist

Kiana Hayeri

Photographer

- Kiana Hayeri is an Iranian photographer who moved to Canada when she was a teenager.
- Her photographic work explores themes of migration, adolescence and identity in war-torn countries. She has lived in Afghanistan covering stories of women and girls, and is currently based in Sarajevo.
- Her works have received numerous awards, such as the Tim Hetherington Visionary Award (2020), the James Foley Award for Conflict Reporting (2020), the Robert Capa Gold Medal (2021).
- Her photobook, *When Cages Fly*, was published in 2024 and has also received numerous awards and nominations.

Context

- Every domestic worker in Saudi Arabia is a foreign national. An estimated 200.000 Kenyan nationals reside in Saudi Arabia, of whom approximately 150.000 work as domestic workers, mostly women. Domestic workers are excluded from Saudi Arabia's Domestic Law, making workers almost entirely dependent on their employers, as changing jobs or leaving the country without the employers' permission is almost impossible.
- Passports are confiscated upon domestic workers' arrival, either by their hiring agencies or by their employers. [Kenyan domestic workers are often verbally, mentally and sexually abused by their employers.](#)
- The Saudi Arabian government imposes nationality-based recruitment cost caps, which are set at the lowest for employers hiring from African countries.
- In Saudi Arabia, unmarried women who give birth face charges and arrests, and even the death penalty.
- The portrait depicts a Kenyan woman, Edith Ingasiani, with her nine-year-old daughter, Blessings, whom she delivered and raised alone in secret in Saudi Arabia as a domestic worker. Like many others, her pay was withheld and her passport confiscated, and without a legal birth certificate, she was raising her child in the shadows. For two years, embassies and immigration offices turned her away as her child was undocumented, as documents in the [investigation led by the NYT](#) show. After eight years, in 2024, Edith and her daughter finally returned home to Kenya.
- This project documents not only one experience but also maps the complex system of deception and coercion in which migration is industrialised, abused, and threatened.
- The story is an example of [global care chains](#) and illustrates patterns of global inequality affecting a precarious, gendered labour force in the global south, who are the main providers of care.



Children Who Do Not Exist

Kiana Hayeri

Jury Notes

- The jury described that 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.
- The photographer uses lighting and composition to humanise the difficulties migrant domestic workers encounter when seeking necessary documentation in Saudi Arabia.
- The jury also commented on how the artistic choices align closely with the story, creating an intimate entry point into a topic that is otherwise difficult to visualise.

Visual Thinking: Portraying Resistance in Female Dignity & Empowerment
See page 42 of See the Story 2026



Sudan's War: A Nation Trapped

Abdulmonam Eassa

Syria/France
for *Le Monde*

Sudan's War: A Nation Trapped

Abdulmonam Eassa

Photographer

- A Abdulmonam Eassa is a self-taught photographer who began his career in Syria. Through his work, he documents daily life in war and post-war zones, focusing on the resilience and dignity of civilians living through conflict.
- After relocating to France in 2018, Eassa reported on the Yellow Vest protests and continued covering major events internationally, including assignments in Sudan, Ukraine, Türkiye, Syria and Chad. Following the fall of the Assad government in 2024, he returned to Syria.

Context

- Sudan has long faced internal conflict rooted in ethnic, political and economic tensions, which has been underreported in Western media outlets.
- Sudan has endured the brutal dictatorship of [Omar al-Bashir](#), in which the regime oversaw the secession of South Sudan and the first conflict in Darfur, which was later condemned as genocide by the International Criminal Court.
- In 2019, Bashir's regime was overthrown. However, in 2021, the army's staged coup led to the seizure of the civilian-led transitional government. War began in 2023, when the [Sudanese Armed Forces](#) (SAF) and [Rapid Support Forces](#) paramilitary group (RSF) turned on each other.
- Since the beginning of the war, the conflict escalated into one of the [worst humanitarian crises](#) in the world, and the RSF has been accused of [massacres](#), [sexual abuse](#), [ethnic violence](#) and [looting](#).
- The destruction of civil infrastructure and immense violence have led to a widespread famine across the country, and foreign political interests still fuel the conflict. Over 13 million people have been displaced, and at least 150.000 killed. [An estimated 8 million children are left without access to school, water, electricity and lack of medical care.](#)
- None of these military groups represents the will of the Sudanese people, and the conflict has destabilized neighbour countries as well, with rising instability and violence.
- [Press freedom is also being heavily restricted](#), with journalists fleeing the country due to threats and intimidation and media channels being manipulated and struggling to operate. According to international law, the press should be free to document conflicts. However, due to targeting and threats, journalists are discouraged from working in Sudan.

Jury Notes

- The jury highlighted how the images convey the reality of the conflict in Sudan which is very difficult to express and access. The documentation presents a ground-level perspective which evokes the intensity of the front lines and brings the viewers directly to the environment of war, offering a powerful and unusual visual storytelling.

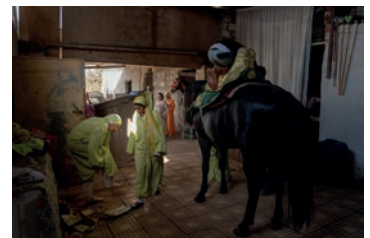
Visual Thinking: Do we need to see graphic imagery to understand what is happening in the world?
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Farīsāt: Gunpowder's Daughters

Chantal Pinzi

Italy
Panos Pictures



Farīsāt: Gunpowder's Daughters

Chantal Pinzi

Photographer

- Chantal Pinzi is a visual activist based in Berlin, Germany, focusing on photojournalism and documentary photography. Her work often addresses issues of resilience in fractured and marginalised communities through the voices of women.
- Pinzi uses photography to examine and question social complexity, capturing and conveying visual narratives that challenge oppressive systems and draw attention to certain issues.
- Being an athlete herself, Pinzi believes that sport can reveal overall societal structures where gender-based inequalities can be perceived and documented.

Context

- *Tbourida*, a Moroccan [traditional equestrian performance](#) dating back to the sixteenth century, is now part of UNESCO heritage, simulating war battles in which ancestral rituals and conventions are reenacted.
- Troupes consist of 15-25 participants, galloping, firing rifles in a choreographed performance and performing military parades.
- *Tbourida* holds an important meaning for Moroccan cultural identity and heritage, protecting the collective memory of communities, evoking national pride in the sport and celebrating bravery as well as the deep bond between the horse and rider.
- Until a few years ago, women were not allowed to ride horses, and *Tbourida* is also traditionally reserved for male participants.
- However, women have been fighting for inclusion, and since 2004, they have been more involved in *Tbourida*, due to family code reforms and the strengthening of women's rights in the country.
- Today, out of 300 troupes, 7 are female-only, surpassing patriarchal roles and asserting women's role in Morocco's cultural heritage.

Jury Notes

- 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.

Visual Thinking: Portraying Resistance in Female Dignity & Empowerment.
See page 42 of See the story 2026



Madagascar's Gen Z Protests

Luis Tato

Spain
Agence France-Presse

Madagascar's Gen Z Protests

Luis Tato

Photographer

- Luis Tato is a photojournalist based in Nairobi, Kenya, currently serving as Chief Photographer and Photo Coordinator for East Africa and the Indian Ocean at Agence France-Presse.
- Tato has won numerous awards, including the Rémi Ochlik Award and Picture of the Year International awards among others.

Context

- Student protests erupted in Madagascar over failing public services, corruption, and worsening economic hardship.
- Climate-related shocks have weakened the economy, while chronic power and water shortages have further intensified public tensions.
- President [Andry Rajoelina](#), who was re-elected in 2023, has been accused of unfair election conditions and fired the Minister of Energy in September, 2025. Rajoelina dissolved his government but refused to resign, prompting widespread demonstrations that were later joined by the [CAPSAT military forces](#). He subsequently went into hiding, after which the [military seized power](#).
- The head of CAPSAT became the transitional president, promising new elections within the next two years.
- The protests reflect a broader pattern of Gen Z-led uprisings worldwide – including Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bulgaria – that have driven political change while often excluding young people from the transitions that follow.
- At least 22 people have been killed and more than 100 injured during the protests, which have continued into 2026.

Jury Notes

- The jury recognised this story as a key highlight of the Gen Z uprisings, 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 meaningful visual evidence of youth activism in 2025.

Visual Thinking: What visual elements in the photographs reveal how state power and the public interact in times of unrest? See page 40 of See the Story 2026



Moon Dust

Mohamed Mahdy

Egypt
Arab Documentary Photography Program



Moon Dust

Mohamed Mahdy

Photographer

- Mohamed Mahdy is a visual storyteller and educator from Alexandria, Egypt. His work focuses on hidden or unseen communities in Egypt, tackling cultural and social issues.
- Mahdy has received numerous awards, and his works have been exhibited internationally. He is also a member of the African Photojournalism Database, a directory of emerging and professional African visual journalists established by World Press Photo and Everyday Africa.
- Mahdy received a World Press Photo Award in the open format category in 2023: [Here, The Doors Don't Know Me | World Press Photo](#).

Context

- Wadi El-Qamar, also known as [Moon Valley](#), in western Alexandria, Egypt, is home to 30.000 residents who live close to a cement factory, filling their homes with toxic dust.
- The factory burns industrial waste and coal, releasing toxic cement dust, causing children to be born with asthma, irreversible respiratory damage, and lung disease.
- In the last decade, families have filed legal complaints and cases, after which the court has found the Titan Cement factory guilty of pollution. This was the [first environmental case won in Egypt](#).
- However, the company took seven years to begin compensating the involved families. Only four residents have received payments, and many who fought in these legal battles have since passed away.
- Despite delayed payments, the verdict demonstrates a turning point in acknowledging environmental injustice.
- This project helped to secure legal and medical aid for families living in this area.
- Mahdy lives close to this neighbourhood in Alexandria and also has asthma.

Jury Notes

- The jury appreciated the long-term commitment of the photograph to document the health hazards and their consequences in this community in Alexandria.
- Every photograph is intentional, portraying a powerful documentation of both metaphorical and physical evidence of living through environmental violence up close.
- 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.

Visual Thinking: Why do we need diverse perspectives?
See page 45 of See the story 2026

Asia-Pacific and Oceania



Mountain Resident of Wanglang

Rob G. Green

United States
National Geographic Society, Henry Luce Foundation

Mountain Resident of Wanglang

Rob G. Green

Photographer

- Rob G. Green is a documentary photographer and filmmaker based in Montana, United States, where he's spent years documenting the conservation challenges shaping the future of the Western United States region.
- Green is a National Geographic Explorer, which means he receives funding and support from the National Geographic Society to protect and illuminate the world through his storytelling work.
- Trained in journalism and natural resource conflict resolution, Green works at the intersection of people, land, and policy. He has documented wildlife conflict and wildfire response from the closest possible vantage point, often working closely with bear specialists, tribal biologists, elite wildland fire crews and rural landowners. His approach emphasises slow relationship-building and sustained engagement with the communities he photographs.

Context

- This photograph is an extremely rare sighting of a wild panda living in the Wanglang National Nature Reserve in Sichuan, China.
- Established in 1965, Wanglang is one of China's oldest wild panda nature reserves and today serves as a key site for education and scientific research collaboration.
- This photograph is a result of a larger collaboration supported by the National Geographic Society's U.S.-China Parks Exchange, supported by the Henry Luce Foundation. The exchange brought together two American and two Chinese photographers to work across each other's national parks.
- Green's team gained authorisation through long-standing partnerships with Wanglang rangers, whose data on panda habitat use is vital for effective conservation planning.
- This photo was taken using a motion-activated camera secured firmly to the ground. The mount was fixed in place to prevent it from being moved or disturbed by the pandas.
- The camera was carefully camouflaged and placed just beside a path the pandas already use, so it wouldn't disrupt their natural behaviour.
- These camera traps were placed in locations that [Wanglang rangers were already studying](#), thereby further reducing the abundance of novel human-influenced sites in the research area. For Green, ethical deployment is critical. The goal is always to document presence, not alter behaviour.

Jury Notes

- The jury believes that this photograph — the result of a decade-long collaboration between storytellers and scientists — serves not only as an energising example of visual journalism, but also as crucial evidence of the continued existence of wild pandas.
- 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.

Visual Thinking: Why do we need stories of resilience, hope, and positive change?
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A Desperate Plea

Tyrone Siu

Hong Kong
Reuters

A Desperate Plea

Tyrone Siu

Photographer

- Tyrone Siu is a staff photojournalist with Reuters, based in Hong Kong, where he covers local and regional news across Asia and internationally.
- His assignments have included the Hong Kong pro-democracy protests, the Rohingya refugee crisis, United States immigration enforcement operations, and the Israel/Palestine conflict.
- Siu's work has been recognised with several awards throughout his career, including the Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News Photography, Pictures of the Year International (POYi), and awards from the Atlanta Journalism Seminar and the Hong Kong Press Photographers Association (HKPPA).

Context

- The person in this photograph is Mr Wong. He is asking for help as his wife is trapped in the burning apartment complex behind. Prior to this photo being taken, he was on the phone with her as she gave him her final words.
- The fire is the deadliest one Hong Kong has had in nearly 80 years. It happened in Wang Fuk Court, a high-rise [residential complex that houses more than 4,600 residents](#).
- The fire killed 168 people. More than 2,000 firefighters were involved in the operation, with one killed and 12 injured; helicopters were withheld as aerial drops don't work on fires inside high-rises. It took 44 hours to put out the fire.
- The origin of the fire is unclear, but the reason why it became so deadly is due to the materials used during the renovation of the building. Bamboo has long been used for scaffolding because it's cheap and flexible, but it is highly flammable.
- In the incident described, [fire spread quickly along the mesh and bamboo structure](#), causing it to collapse. Additional flammable materials, like foam used in renovations, likely worsened the rapid spread.

Jury Notes

- This image captures an emotionally charged moment, conveying the 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.



Bondi Beach Terror Attack

Edwina Pickles

Australia
The Sydney Morning Herald

Bondi Beach Terror Attack

Edwina Pickles

Photographer

- Edwina Pickles was born and raised in Sydney, Australia. Her work focuses on photographing daily life in Australia, from environmental portraits to humanitarian issues.
- Pickles attended Sydney University, where she majored in photography and film. After graduating with her Bachelor's degree, she began to work as a staff photographer at *The Sydney Morning Herald*.
- She lives across the street from where the shooting took place, and heard gunshots before running out to document the event.

Context

- An unidentified police officer is hunched over and holding onto a police vehicle in despair as she is guarding the bodies of two victims, Boris and Sofia Gurman. The Gurmans, who were just weeks away from their 35th wedding anniversary, were killed during the Bondi Beach Terror Attack in Sydney, Australia, while attempting to disarm one of the shooters.
- Defiance by community members saved many lives. Syrian-Australian shopkeeper Ahmed al-Ahmed charged the second gunman and disarmed him. In his struggles against the gunmen, [al-Ahmed was shot twice and wounded](#), and the Gurmans were killed.
- The two gunmen were motivated by ISIS ideologies and targeted 'Chanukah by the Sea,' a community event celebrating the Jewish holiday. In total, 15 innocent members were killed, victims ranging in age from 10 to 87.
- Following the tragedy, thousands gathered for a commemorative paddle-out at Bondi Beach to honour the victims, while the federal government fast-tracked reviews of [national security laws and the protection of faith-based gatherings](#).

Jury Notes

- The jury recognised 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.
- This image captures a decisive and chaotic moment following a mass shooting that took place at a Jewish Hanukkah celebration in Sydney, Australia. 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.

Visual Thinking: Do we need to see graphic imagery to understand what is happening in the world?
See page 33 of See the Story 2026



Wedding in the Flood

Aaron Favila

Philippines
Associated Press

Wedding in the Flood

Aaron Favila

Photographer

- Aaron Favila is a photojournalist with the Associated Press, where he has worked since 1998. Based in the Philippines, he covers breaking news, natural disasters, sports, conflicts, climate change, religion and daily life.
- He is largely self-taught in photography and developed his practice through independent study and field experience.
- He is a board member of the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (2025 to 2026) and a member of the Photojournalists' Center of the Philippines, where he mentors emerging photographers.

Context

- Jade Rick Verdillo and Jamaica Aguilar carry on their wedding ceremony amidst the flood caused by Typhoon Wipha in July 2025. The venue was a historic church. The couple were together for 10 years before they got married.
- [The Philippines is battered by about 20 typhoons and tropical storms each year.](#) Coastal Bulacan, the region where the wedding took place, faces frequent and increasingly severe flooding caused by heavy rains, typhoons, storm surges, and land subsidence, with growing impacts on communities' livelihoods and safety.
- [Greenpeace accused](#) officials and contractors in the Philippines of massive corruption in flood control projects, alleging that up to 1.089 trillion Philippine pesos (15.2 billion euros) in climate funds may have been lost since 2023 — sparking nationwide protests known as the Trillion Peso March amid worsening flood impacts on communities.

Jury Notes

- This story offers a fresh perspective on climate change and intensifying tropical storms affecting the region, capturing the scale of the disaster while centring the resilience of local communities.
- The jury finds that the story uses striking, symbolic imagery to depict people continuing their celebrations even as the waters rise.
- They thought that the photographer provides a significant visual record that highlights both human and environmental dimensions of recurring crises.

Visual Thinking: Creating public engagement with the climate crisis.
See page 37 of See the Story 2026



Scam Hub Under Siege

Jes Aznar

Philippines
for *The New York Times*



Scam Hub Under Siege

Jes Aznar Matthew Abbott

Photographer

- Jes Aznar studied Photojournalism at the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung-Ateneo de Manila College for Journalism and Conflict Sensitive Journalism at the Deutsche Welle Akademie in Berlin, Germany.
- He is the founder of EverydayImpunity, an Instagram initiative documenting the Philippine drug war's culture of impunity and the aftermath of extrajudicial killings.
- After working for Agence France-Presse, Aznar dedicated years documenting Mindanao in the Philippines, in which he was nearly killed in the wake of the Ampatuan Massacre in 2009, where 58 people were assassinated, including 37 journalists, in one day.

Context

- On 21 November 2025, the [Karen National Liberation Army](#) seized Shunda Park, a cyber-scam centre complex situated in the middle of rice paddies and rainforests in Karen State. The Karen, pronounced Kuh-REN, are one of Myanmar's many ethnic groups that have been persecuted by the military for generations..
- This series shows the abandoned offices and the hundreds of workers in the aftermath of this operation.
- Shunda Park is a Chinese-run office complex built specifically to serve as a scam centre. Ever since its opening in 2024, it has had approximately 3,500 workers from nearly 30 countries. Some of the workers were there voluntarily to earn money, while others were tricked or trafficked into work.
- Many workers couldn't cross into Thailand due to a lack of documents, while about 900 Chinese nationals stayed, fearing imprisonment if repatriated to China. The aftermath of the raid then became a humanitarian crisis.
- With millions of people falling victim to online shakedowns every year, the cyberscamming industry has quickly grown into one of the planet's most lucrative criminal enterprises, [according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime](#).

Jury Notes

- 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.

Visual Thinking: Picturing conflict.
See page 32 of See the story 2026



The Last Dolphin Hunters

Matthew Abbott

Australia
Oculi, for *The New York Times*

The Last Dolphin Hunters

Matthew Abbott

Photographer

- Matthew Abbott is a documentary photographer from Australia specialising in in-depth visual storytelling. He regularly contributes to *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *National Geographic*.
- Abbott is represented internationally by Panos Pictures and is a current member of the Oculi collective, Australia's leading co-operative of visual storytellers. He also won another World Press Photo Award with another project about indigenous communities and environmental impact in the 2022 Contest, named [Saving Forests with Fire](#).

Context

- Fanalei Island in South Malaita, Solomon Islands, has been reduced to a narrow strip of sand and coral by rising seas. Due to rising sea levels and saltwater flooding the island, the once fertile land is now completely incapable of sustaining agriculture.
- The inhabitants expect that the island will not exist in the near future, as the sea level near the Solomon Islands has been rising by eight millimetres per year compared to the global average of 2.8 to 3.6 mm.
- The main subject matters of these series show the tradition and future of the island. Dolphin hunting is a longstanding cultural practice that supplies food and teeth used as currency for bride-price and community needs. However, the hunt itself is labour-intensive and unpredictable, and faces international pressure to end the practice.
- On the other hand, since 2024, seaweed farming has provided a more stable and lucrative income than dolphin hunting, reducing reliance on traditional practices and moving the community from economic desolation into global supply chains.
- Its growth is reshaping community dynamics — limiting resources for hunting, creating tensions, and potentially driving the decline of a culturally significant but controversial tradition.

Jury Notes

- 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. The strength of composition, use of colour, and the intimate documentation of the changing climate, culture, and community are all notable.
- 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.

Visual Thinking: Creating public engagement with the climate crisis.
See page 37 of See the Story 2026



Motherhood at 60

Wu Fang

China



Motherhood at 60

Wu Fang

Photographer

- Wu Fang is an independent photographer from China. He is a former contributing photographer for Reuters, AFP, AP and Getty Images, and previously served as director of the photography departments at *Xin'an Evening News* and *Hefei Evening News*.
- He has reported on major national and international events, including the National People's Congress, the Wenchuan Earthquake, the conflict in North Burma, the Beijing Olympic Games, and FIFA World Cups in South Africa, Brazil, and Russia.
- Wu is a member of the China Photographers Association and serves as the secretary-general of the Theme Creation Committee of the Anhui Provincial Photographers Association.

Context

- This story follows Sheng Hailin, who gave birth to twin daughters at the age of 60. The photos span 15 years of her children, Zhizhi and Huihui, capturing moments from their birth and everyday life, as well as significant events such as the loss of their father and their high school entrance exams.
- Sheng Hailin chose to pursue in vitro fertilisation (IVF) therapy to conceive her children after her eldest daughter unexpectedly passed away. In China, losing an only child carries profound social and economic consequences, as children are traditionally expected to provide elder care and continue the family line.
- More than one million families have faced this loss, largely as a result of the One-Child Policy. This population is known as *shīdú*—a term for parents who have lost their only child.
- After her husband, Wu Jingzhou, suffered a stroke in 2016 and died in 2022, the responsibility of caring for their daughters fell entirely on Sheng Hailin.
- To support her daughters' upbringing and education, Sheng Hailin came out of retirement, travelling across China to give health lectures and building a second career as a live-streamer with 940,000 followers.

Jury Notes

- 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 emphasising 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



Emma the Social Robot

Paula Hornickel

Germany

Emma the Social Robot

Paula Hornickel

Photographer

- Paula Hornickel is a documentary photographer based in Dortmund and Berlin. Her work explores themes surrounding future visions, pop culture, and social issues.
- She is currently pursuing a double master's degree in Photographic Studies at the FH Dortmund University of Applied Sciences and Arts and Visual Communication at the Berlin University of the Arts.
- Hornickel works as a freelance photographer on editorial assignments and collaborative projects.
- She also co-founded the photo collective Visual Wellness, which organises group exhibitions, print swaps and provides a space for photographers to engage in dialogue with other photographers. She is also a member of Freelens and the Fotobus Society.

Context

- Loneliness has been rising in Europe, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving the older population more alone than ever, with increasing figures every year.
- This project depicts the current state of German care homes, facing two crises: staff shortages and loneliness.
- These crises have prompted these facilities to try out [social robots](#) such as Emma, designed to engage in conversations, recognise faces, remember previous conversations, and respond with both gestures and speech.
- A study conducted in a care home in Albershausen, Germany, found that despite limitations, these social robots may have the potential to improve the quality of life of the residents.
- Waltraud, the woman in the picture, explains how she really enjoys it when Emma tells her jokes, but still prefers human interactions.
- With the rise of artificial intelligence and robots in general, questions also arise about privacy, autonomy, and the limits of technology.

Jury Notes

- The 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 colour palette, the scene balances humour 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 ageing population.



Polar Bear on Sperm Whale

Roie Galitz

Israel

Polar Bear on Sperm Whale

Roie Galitz

Photographer

- Roie Galitz is an award-winning wildlife photographer, entrepreneur, and educator.
- For two decades, Galitz has been exploring and documenting our planet's wildlife. His photographs have been presented in local and international exhibitions, featured in magazines including National Geographic, and honoured with international awards.
- He founded the Galitz School of Photography in Israel, where he shares his passion and knowledge on photography. As a public speaker, he gives talks around the world, from the United Nations HQ to TEDx, climate summits and more.

Context

- The Arctic is warming at an increasingly rapid pace, causing longer ice-free summer seasons which last 20 weeks longer than in the previous 30 years.
- Polar bears primarily hunt seals. They rely on ice platforms for hunting, travelling, and breeding. As the ice platforms dissolve, polar bears are required to swim and travel longer to hunt, leaving them more tired and catching less prey. Therefore, polar bears in this area are more reliant on scavenging and catching prey on land.
- Sperm whales typically do not swim in ice-covered waters, presenting a rare sight. The photo depicts [how the polar bears resort to scavenging and eating a dead sperm whale](#).
- The photographer has spent two days in a small boat, observing the scene, and finally capturing it by drone.

Jury Notes

- The jury was impressed by how the photographer captured this rare moment in a technologically challenging environment.
- 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.

Visual Thinking: Creating public engagement with the climate crisis.
See page 37 of See the Story 2026



Russian Attack on Kyiv

Evgeniy Maloletka

Ukraine
Associated Press

Russian Attack on Kyiv

Evgeniy Maloletka

Photographer

- Evgeniy Maloletka is a war photographer, journalist and filmmaker from Berdyansk, Ukraine. Since 2014, he has been covering the war in Ukraine.
- He has covered several other conflicts, including the protests in Belarus, the Euromaidan Revolution and the Nagorno-Karabakh war.
- In 2023, Maloletka won the [World Press Photo of the Year](#) and two Pulitzer Prizes for Public Service and Breaking News Photography. In 2024, Maloletka was among the creators of the documentary *20 Days in Mariupol*, which received some of the most prestigious awards in the film industry, including an Academy Award..

Context

- [In 2014](#), Ukraine turned into a conflict zone after Russia seized Crimea and started supporting separatist forces in the southeastern Donbas region by providing them with weapons and aid. [The United Nations estimated that the conflict in the Donbas had claimed 14,000 lives between 2014 and 2021.](#)
- In November 2021, Russian troops and military equipment were placed along the Ukraine border, insinuating a full-scale Russian invasion. Putin denied having any plans to invade, but shortly afterwards, he demanded that NATO stop expanding and move its borders back to their 1997 location. The West did not comply. On February 24, 2022, Putin launched a full-scale military invasion of Ukraine.
- Shortly before launching the war, [President Putin declared the entire regions of Luhansk and Donetsk independent from Ukraine](#), not just the smaller areas previously controlled by Moscow-supported separatists.
- In 2025, 3 years after the full-scale [invasion of Ukraine](#), Russia launched one of its deadliest attacks on Kyiv, the capital city. Missiles and drones have hit several residential neighbourhoods overnight, killing 13 and leaving 90 people wounded on the day of the attack.
- Russia's attacks continue to devastate life all across Ukraine, targeting energy, educational, and healthcare infrastructures. Sirens and alerts have become a normal backdrop to daily life, causing constant anxiety and mental health issues.
- [According to the UN](#), by February 2026, at least 15,364 civilians had been killed since the invasion began.

Jury Notes

- The image captures the shock and vulnerability of a survivor of an attack on Kyiv. The woman's lost gaze and her clean, loose shoes — that emphasises 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, honouring the skill and dedication of local Ukrainian photographers.

Visual Thinking: Picturing Conflict.
See page 32 of See the story 2026



Burned Land

Brais Lorenzo

Spain
EFE, Revista 5W, *El País*

Burned Land

Brais Lorenzo

Photographer

- Brais Lorenzo is trained in photography, history, and geography. His work encompasses social and environmental issues.
- Lorenzo regularly contributes to the news agency EFE and has contributed to international agencies including Anadolu, Bloomberg and Agence France-Presse.
- His work has been published in publications such as El País, El Mundo, The Guardian, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and many more. His work has received many national and international awards.

Context

- This project documents the devastating wildfire season in 2025 in Galicia, one of the most destructive ones in recent years.
- Due to the accelerating weather conditions and worsening climate crisis, [Galicia](#) – one of the regions most affected by wildfires in Europe – faces the global trend of longer, more unpredictable and intense fire seasons.
- More than 200,000 hectares burned across Galicia during Spain's worst fire season in about three decades. [Together with neighbouring northern Portugal, the region accounted for two-thirds of the one million hectares affected across Europe.](#)
- As many people have moved to urban areas, farmland is increasingly being converted to forests, of which 70% is owned by private landowners, leaving much of the land unmanaged.
- The 2025 Iberian fire season led to [calls for better land management](#), prevention, and changes in how landscapes are managed. In January 2026, the Spanish government approved additional policies to prevent, monitor, and extinguish forest fires.
- The photographer grew up with the smell of smoke every summer and has been documenting wildfires since 2011.

Jury Notes

- 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. 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.

Visual Thinking: Creating public engagement with the climate crisis.
See page 37 of See the Story 2026



Drone Wars

David Guttenfelder

United States
The New York Times



Drone Wars

David Guttenfelder

Photographer

- David Guttenfelder is a visual journalist for *The New York Times* based in Minneapolis, covering geopolitical conflict, humanitarian crises, environmental issues, and social injustice.
- He helped open a bureau in Pyongyang for the Associated Press, the first Western news agency to establish an office in North Korea, and has since made more than 40 reporting trips to the country.
- David Guttenfelder has received countless awards, including a Pulitzer Prize finalist nomination, Pictures of the Year International, and the National Press Photographers Association. He has also been a World Press Photo winner nine times.

Context

- [In 2014](#), Ukraine turned into a conflict zone after Russia seized Crimea and started supporting separatist forces in the southeastern Donbas region by providing them with weapons and aid. [The United Nations estimated that the conflict in the Donbas had claimed 14,000 lives between 2014 and 2021.](#)
- In November 2021, Russian troops and military equipment were placed along the Ukraine border, insinuating a full-scale Russian invasion. Putin denied having any plans to invade, but shortly afterwards, he demanded that NATO stop expanding and move its borders back to their 1997 location. The West did not comply. On February 24, 2022, Putin launched a full-scale military invasion of Ukraine.
- Shortly before launching the war, [President Putin declared the entire regions of Luhansk and Donetsk independent from Ukraine](#), not just the smaller areas previously controlled by Moscow-supported separatists.
- When Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, artillery, missiles, tanks, and trench warfare dominated the battlefields. As the war progressed, one of the most significant shifts in modern warfare happened: the rise of drone combat.
- Hobby drones are repurposed and new ones constructed with precision, produced in mass. Russia and Ukraine are very close in [manufacturing millions of drones every year](#). This accelerating drone technology is outpacing international legal frameworks, raising overall questions regarding accountability, oversight, and the protection of civilian life.
- Vast areas in Ukraine have been turned into “kill zones” where residential neighbourhoods and civilians are targeted.

Jury Notes

- 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. 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.

Visual Thinking: Picturing Conflict. See page 32 of See the story 2026



Engla Louise *Sanna Sjöswärd*

Sweden/Iran
for Corren

Engla Louise

Sanna Sjöswärd

Photographer

- Sanna Sjöswärd is a photographer, author, and visual storyteller focusing on identity, memory, and human dignity, born in Iran and raised in Sweden.
- She has worked as a freelance photographer for several of Sweden's largest newspapers while also developing long-term personal projects focused on individual and collective experiences.
- She has published several books, including *Roots* (2006); *My Mother is a Persian Princess* (2009), about reconnecting with her biological family in Iran; *Eldsjälar* (Fire Souls, 2011), portraying people who turn hardship into constructive change; and *The Hatred of Jews* (2021), documenting antisemitism in Sweden. Her works have received numerous awards, including Sweden's Picture of the Year.

Context

- Engla Louise, who was a ballerina in her youth, has lived with severe [anorexia](#) since she was 10 years old. In the photos taken in 2025, she weighed 25kg and had to be tube-fed for seven years.
- Anorexia is a disease which affects both the body and mind and remains a widely misunderstood condition that goes beyond matters of choice and control.
- In the last three decades, she has received several treatments, including compulsory hospitalisation and home care. She requires daily extensive support.
- Ballet, dressing up, and being in nature are central to her daily life, shedding light on her personality, which goes beyond her sickness.
- The photographer's nearly twenty-year-long trusted relationship with Engla Louise opens the discourse to the care and living conditions of people who live with severe and long-term eating disorders.

Jury Notes

- 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.

Visual Thinking: Why do we need stories of resilience, hope, and positive change?
See page 52 of the See the Story 2026



Extramuros *William Keo*

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



Extramuros

William Keo

Photographer

- William Keo is a French/Cambodian photographer who explores the topics of migration, social inclusion, and inter-community intolerance.
- He covered the Syrian refugee crisis, conflict in Darfur, migrants in Europe, and the Rohingya humanitarian crisis. Since 2019, he has covered the cycles of violence after the fall of ISIS in Iraq and Syria. He also covers French and international news for the press, such as the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, Israel and Palestine, among others.
- His work has been published in *The New York Times*, *National Geographic*, *Le Monde*, *Libération*, *Vogue*, *The New York Magazine*, and others, and he was represented by Magnum Photos between 2021 and 2024.
- In his ongoing personal project, Keo shares the stories of marginalised people, descendants of immigrants from post-colonial France who are living in the Banlieues.

Context

- William Keo documents the so-called banlieues, peripheral areas in France that reflect the colonial legacy of France.
- Migrant families navigate between high rates of unemployment, segregation and [structural barriers and inequalities](#).
- The housing projects in these areas are known to be neglected and underfunded, pushing lower-income families to the peripheries of the city. While many of these families are third-generation immigrants, prejudices regarding their cultural assimilation persist, creating a space where exclusion and belonging coexist.
- Nevertheless, these communities offer space for creativity, shape identity, belonging and resilience, contributing largely to France's contemporary cultural sphere.
- Keo is the son of Cambodian refugees, offering a unique and up close perspective of the banlieues, depicting his community.

Jury Notes

- This long-term project offers an insight into life in the banlieues in France, illustrating the experiences of second and third generation migrants. It gives close access in the spaces where family, neighbours, and personal narratives exist in social tension with honesty, while still highlighting 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

Visual Thinking: What visual elements in the photographs reveal how state power and the public interact in times of unrest? See page 40 of See the story 2026.

North and Central America



Columbia University Pro-Palestine Protests

Alex Kent

United States
for *The New York Times*

Columbia University Pro-Palestine Protests

Alex Kent

Photographer

- Alex Kent is a freelance photojournalist based in Washington, D.C., United States, whose visual storytelling blends documentary and classic photojournalism. Driven by a deep curiosity about justice, power, and policy, he follows critical issues shaping American society.
- Coming from a background in communications for non-profit legal services, Kent is interested in exploring the real-world consequences of political polarization, healthcare access in rural America, and the tangible impacts of policy decisions on people's lives.
- His work has been recognized by the National Press Photographers Association as an Emerging Vision award recipient and has received numerous honors, including Photographer of the Year from the New York Press Photographers Association.

Context

- Jesse Pearce received her diploma from Barnard College. Barnard College is partnered with its across-the-street neighbour Columbia. She reportedly graduated from Barnard College with a BA in anthropology.
- **20 March 2025:** [President Trump had demanded that Columbia University tighten restrictions on campus protests as a precondition for opening talks on restoring \\$400 million in suspended federal funding.](#)
- **22 March 2025:** [Columbia University agreed to Trump's demands.](#)
- These protests were part of a string of pro-Palestine protests at Columbia University in October 2023 and have continued to the present.
- Protesters claimed "that as long as Columbia funds and profits from imperialist violence, the people will continue to disrupt Columbia's profits and legitimacy." At those protests, around 80 students were suspended for one to three years or expelled.
- This protest was organised by Columbia University Apartheid Divest. These were their demands:
 - Full financial divestment from Zionist occupation, apartheid, and genocide
 - Academic boycott of all complicit institutions, including the cancellation of the Tel Aviv Global Center.
 - Cops and ICE off our campus.
 - End Columbia's occupation of Harlem; return land to Harlemites and open the gates!
 - Amnesty for all students, staff, faculty, and workers targeted by Columbia University's discipline.



Columbia University Pro-Palestine Protests

Alex Kent

Jury Notes

- 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.

Visual Thinking: State power and military overreach in photographs.
See page 40 in *See the Story 2026*



Portland Protests ICE

Jan Sonnenmair

United States

Portland Protests ICE

Jan Sonnenmair

Photographer

- Jan Sonnenmair is a photojournalist and commercial photographer living in Portland, United States. Her work focuses on human-centred stories, often exploring personal experiences and social realities.
- She began her career as a staff photographer at The Dallas Morning News and has since worked internationally on editorial and commercial assignments for magazines and corporate clients.
- Sonnenmair has received several awards, including in the 1993 World Press Photo Contest for a four-year project documenting the life of a child living with AIDS. In 2016, she was selected as a Knight Fellow at Ohio University, where she completed a master's degree in visual communication.

Context

- Law Enforcement agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security outside the ICE administration building, clashed with protesters. The location of the protests: South Waterfront ICE Facility in Portland, Oregon.
- [In his second term \(2025–2026\), President Trump has implemented a large-scaled immigration agenda centered on the goal of conducting the largest mass deportation operation in U.S. history.](#) This strategy shifts focus from the border to the interior, significantly escalating the frequency and scale of ICE raids.
- Portland as the Birthplace of Occupy ICE: The first "Occupy ICE" encampment began in Portland on June 17, 2018, before spreading to cities like New York and Los Angeles.
- Portland became a key "ground zero" for anti-ICE protests in 2025-2026 due to sustained, daily direct action aimed at closing a South Waterfront ICE facility, marked by nightly clashes, federal intervention, and creative, high-profile tactics.
- Recent escalations in public protests against frequent ICE raids have been intensified by several [high-profile fatal shootings involving federal agents in early 2026.](#)
- These incidents, particularly in Minneapolis, have sparked nationwide "ICE Out" demonstrations and legal challenges from local officials.
- The fatal shooting victims that have served as primary flashpoints include Renee Nicole Good, Alex Pretti, Keith Porter Jr., and Silverio Villegas González.
- [These deaths occurred alongside a record 32 deaths in ICE custody in 2025, the highest number in over two decades.](#)



Portland Protests ICE

Jan Sonnenmair

Jury Notes

- 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.

Visual Thinking: State power and military overreach in photographs.
See page 40 in *See the Story 2026*



The Trials of the Achi Women

Victor J. Blue

United States
for *The New York Times Magazine*

The Trials of the Achi Women

Victor J. Blue

Photographer

- Victor J. Blue is a New York based photojournalist and a 2024 ASU Future Security Fellow at the New America Foundation, whose work is most often concerned with the legacy of armed conflict, the reclamation of human rights, and unequal outcomes resulting from policy and politics. He is a contributing artist at Harper's Magazine and holds a Master's Degree in Visual Communication from Ohio University.
- His photographs appear in *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Bloomberg News*, *Time*, *New Lines Magazine*, and *Mother Jones*.
- His images have been exhibited at the Bronx Documentary Center, Powerhouse Gallery, the Walker Art Center, the San Francisco Arts Commission, and the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.
- His work has been supported by grants from the Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting, the NPPA, and Ohio University, and recognized with eight Pictures of the Year International awards, five NPPA Best of Photojournalism awards, and by American Photography, the Overseas Press Club, and The Alexia Grants.

Context

- The civil war, or the *Conflicto Armado Interno* (Armed Internal Conflict) as it is often referred to in Guatemala, was a 36-year war that started in 1960, triggered by the US-orchestrated overthrow of democratically elected president Jacobo Árbenz in 1954, and ended in 1996 after the signing of peace accords.
- The roots of the Guatemalan civil war reach back through nearly 500 years of violence and ethnic exclusion. The Spanish conquest of Guatemala replaced the socio-economic order of the ancient Mayan civilization with a harsh plantation economy based on forced labor. Although Guatemala gained independence in 1821, it continued to be ruled by a series of military dictators aligned with the landed oligarchy.
- In 2011, 36 Achi women decided to file a complaint with the Public Prosecutor's Office (MP) and report the violence they had experienced during the civil war. When the complaint was filed with the MP, it was not expected to be a long process; however, it took the prosecutor's office seven years to bring the case to court.
- Of the 36 women, the MP filed charges against only five of them, prosecuting only former civil defense patrol members and leaving out military personnel and commissioners.
- On November 30, 2016, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruled that the State of Guatemala must remove the obstacles that maintained impunity in this case and requested that investigations into acts of genocide against the Maya Achí people be reopened in order to punish those responsible for human rights violations. The Achí women had been seeking justice for more than 40 years.



The Trials of the Achi Women

Victor J. Blue

Context

- Twelve testimonies were heard during the trial in 2025. These included those of the six direct victims in the case, three who testified in advance of the trial and three who testified before the court, as well as eyewitnesses and contextual witnesses. Doña Paulina was one of the six direct victims who testified before the court.
- The Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH) determined that 20% of the Maya Achi population was eliminated during the Guatemalan armed conflict, and Rabinal was identified as one of five regions where the army committed genocide.
- According to the CEH, nearly 90% of cases of sexual violence recorded during the internal armed conflict were committed against Indigenous women.

Jury Notes

- This powerful portrait of Doña Paulina Ixpata Alvarado conveys the Achí 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).

Visual Thinking: Portraying Resistance in Female Dignity & Empowerment.
See page 42 in *See the Story 2026*



ICE Arrests at New York Court

Carol Guzy

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



ICE Arrests at New York Court

Carol Guzy

Photographer

- Carol Guzy is a photojournalist known for her coverage of humanitarian crises and conflict. She was born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, United States. Her work focuses on long-form documentary projects and news reporting, both in the United States and internationally
- Guzy is the first journalist to receive four Pulitzer Prizes. She received the award for Feature Photography for her coverage of the conflict in Kosovo, and three Pulitzer Prizes for Breaking News/Spot News Photography, including for coverage of the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the United States military intervention in Haiti, and the Armero tragedy in Colombia.
- Her work has also been recognised with multiple honors and awards, including being named Photographer of the Year for the National Press Photographers Association three times, and nine times for the White House News Photographers Association.

Context

- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was formed as part of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, a response to the terror attacks on 11 September 2001. The legislation created the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), with ICE as one of its subsidiary agencies.
- In his second term (2025–2026), President Trump has implemented a large-scale immigration agenda centred on the goal of conducting the largest mass deportation operation in U.S. history.
 - This strategy shifts focus from the border to the interior, significantly escalating the frequency and scale of ICE raids.
- The 10th floor of 26 Federal Plaza in Lower Manhattan is a controversial U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) holding facility, described in 2025 as having severely overcrowded, unsanitary, and bad conditions.
- [More than 56,000 immigrants were in government custody on June 15 2025, exceeding the current capacity of 41,000.](#)
- While public rhetoric emphasizes "criminals," [data shows a 2,450% increase in the detention of individuals with no criminal record beyond immigration violations.](#)
- A little more than half believe some level of deportation is necessary, an October 2025 survey from the non-partisan Pew Research Center suggested.
 - But the same poll suggests that the majority of Americans have concerns about Trump's methods.
 - [It found that a majority of US adults 53% believed the Trump administration was doing "too much" to deport undocumented immigrants. About 36% backed the approach.](#)



ICE Arrests at New York Court

Carol Guzy

Jury Notes

- 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.

Visual Thinking: How can photographers communicate the impact of politics on people's lives? See page 41 in See the Story 2026.



Los Angeles on Fire

Ethan Swope

United States
for Associated Press

Los Angeles on Fire

Ethan Swope

Photographer

- Ethan Swope is a photojournalist and documentary filmmaker based in Los Angeles, United States. His work spans breaking news and long-form visual storytelling, covering conflict, climate, politics, and communities in moments of profound transition.
- Swope began freelancing as a teenager and has since contributed to international publications and wire agencies, including The Associated Press and Getty Images
- Swope was named Student Photographer of the Year by the White House News Photographers Association and has been recognized by POY, CPOY, and other industry organizations. His photographs have appeared in TIME's Top 10 Images and have been exhibited internationally.

Context

- On January 7th, 2025, a series of wildfires began in Southern California, heavily affecting Los Angeles communities. [The fires spread rapidly due to an abnormally dry year coupled with extreme winds raging at up to 100 miles per hour.](#)
- The fire ignitions were human-caused, although the exact trigger remains under investigation. On the weather and climate side, there were record amounts of flammable vegetation due to extreme wetness followed by extreme heat and record dryness.
- Based on preliminary estimates, the two largest blazes, the Eaton Fire and the Palisades Fire, have already moved into the second (Eaton) and third (Palisades) spots on California's list of most destructive fires on record.
- The official confirmed death toll from these fires is 31. However, a study published by the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) found that the death toll could be much higher. [The study](#) estimates the excess death toll as a result of the effects of the wildfires at around 440.
- The 2025 Los Angeles wildfires have resulted in significant economic, property, and employment losses, with total property damages estimated between \$28.0 billion and \$53.8 billion.
- [Human-caused warming trends may be responsible for nearly two-thirds of the observed increase in summer fire weather conditions over the past 40 years.](#)

Jury Notes

- 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

Tanner's Song

Jahi Chikwendiu

Photographer

- Jahi Chikwendiu is a photographer based in Washington, D.C., United States, who covers a wide range of national and international news stories. Chikwendiu was a staff photographer with The Washington Post from 2001 to 2025.
- During his almost 25 years at The Washington Post, Chikwendiu reported on a broad range of assignments in the United States and internationally, covering stories in dozens of countries across five continents.
- His work has received recognition from organisations including the Days Japan International Photojournalism Awards, the National Press Photographers Association, the Overseas Press Club, Pictures of the Year International, the Atlanta Photojournalism Seminar, the National Association of Black Journalists, the White House News Photographers Association and the Scripps Howard Awards.

Context

- Tanner was diagnosed with Stage 4 colon cancer in November 2020
 - He finished college and got a job but lost it due to fatigue from his cancer treatments
 - He banked his sperm shortly after receiving his diagnosis as chemotherapy can lead to infertility
- Tanner is of Native American descent (quarter Catawba, quarter Navajo, and half White)
 - [People of Native American descent have the second-highest rate of colorectal cancer \(African Americans have the highest\)](#)
- [In 2025, more than 200,000 people ages 15 to 49 were expected to be newly diagnosed with cancer.](#)
- [People under the age of 50 are the only broad age group that had an overall rise in cancer from 1995-2020](#)
 - To illustrate, somebody born in 1990 has a two- to threefold increased risk of certain cancers compared to someone born in 1955.
- Between 2010 and 2019, approximately 63% of early-onset cancers were among women. Cancer incidence rates in women under 50 are now 82% higher than their male counterparts, up from 51% in 2002.
- [This type of “birth-cohort effect” suggests that environmental and lifestyle exposures may be behind the increase in early-onset cancer.](#)



Tanner's Song

Jahi Chikwendiu

Jury Notes

- 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.

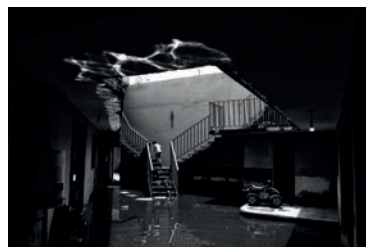
Visual Thinking: Why do we need stories of resilience, hope, and positive change?
See page 52 in See the Story 2026.



Mexico, A Changing Climate

César Rodríguez

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



Mexico, A Changing Climate

César Rodríguez

Photographer

- César Rodríguez (b. 1983) is a photographer from Tepic, Nayarit, Mexico, whose work focuses on migration, human rights and climate change. He is based in Xalisco, Mexico.
- His work has been published in Time Magazine, The Washington Post Magazine, National Geographic, Der Spiegel, The New York Times, El Pais Semanal, El Pais, Le Monde, Bloomberg, The Guardian, The Washington Post, among others.
- Rodríguez has directed and filmed four personal short films, Huicholes del Tabaco, If Hell Existed, Guerrero, Amapola, and Matamoros, Dreams on Hold.
- In 2022, he published his first photobook, Montaña Roja, which was selected among the top 10 photobooks recommended by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York and was a finalist for the 2023 Paris Photo–Aperture PhotoBook Awards. His second book, Hoja Dorada, was a finalist for the Author Book Award at Les Rencontres d'Arles in 2024 and for the 2024 Paris Photo–Aperture PhotoBook Awards.

Context

- Mexico is a country that is particularly vulnerable to droughts, with 52% of its territory located in an arid or semi-arid climate. From late 2022 to May 2024, [76% of Mexico's territory was experiencing drought.](#)
- Renewable water availability has dropped by 81% since 1950.
- [It is predicted that between 40% and 80% of Mexico's population will live with high water stress by 2050.](#)
- Over the past 20 years there have been around 2.7 million internally displaced people in Mexico as a result of environmental disasters.
- Gulf of Mexico sea levels are already rising three times faster than the global average.
- [According to Greenpeace, El Bosque in the state of Tabasco is the first community to be officially recognised as displaced by climate change.](#)
- 76 died and dozens went missing during flash floods in Poza Rica, Veracruz.

Jury Notes

- 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.

Visual Thinking: Which images, in your opinion, create more engagement, and why?
See page 37 in See the Story 2026.

South America



A Territory of Hope *Priscila Ribeiro*

Brazil

A Territory of Hope

Priscila Ribeiro

Photographer

- Priscila Ribeiro is a documentary photographer whose work focuses on themes such as human rights, migration, gender-based violence, and the environment. Her approach combines humanised communication with a deep commitment to empathy and social justice.
- A member of Women Photograph, Ribeiro works on long-term projects and contributes as a freelance photographer to media outlets such as *The New York Times* and Reuters.
- In 2025, Ribeiro won first place in the POY Latam in the Daily Life category for a single photo and was a finalist in the FotoDoc documentary photography contest held in São Paulo. She was a finalist at the International Photography Festival of Paraty, selected among the 100 photographers of the year by the Women Photograph collective, and her work has been recognized in awards such as the Head On Photo Awards (Australia) and the Royal Photographic Society 166 (United Kingdom).

Context

- [Brazil faces a shortage of more than 6 million homes. People earning less than US\\$1,000 per month account for about 90% of this deficit. It is estimated that more than 25 million Brazilians live in inadequate conditions.](#)
- The latest Brazilian census estimated that in 2022, there were 12,348 favelas, with 16.4 million people living in them.
- It is estimated that around 1.12 billion people currently live in slums, which is 24.8% of the world's population.
- In the Curitiba Region, the housing deficit is up to 80 thousand families.
- The [Parque dos Lagos Community](#) has been fighting for dignified and quality housing since 2013, and today includes more than 200 families who occupy an abandoned piece of land belonging to the Municipal Government of Colombo.
- Currently, the community lacks public infrastructure: access to water and electricity occurs through temporary or irregular connections, and there is no sewage system or paved roads.
- The main benefit of land regularization for the families is legal security of tenure, as they would receive an official document recognizing their right to the land and their homes.

Jury Notes

- 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.

Visual Thinking: Why do we need stories of resilience, hope, and positive change?
See page 52 of See the Story 2026.



Funeral for "The Four of Malvinas" *Santiago Arcos*

Ecuador
for Reuters

Funeral for "The Four of Malvinas"

Santiago Arcos

Photographer

- Santiago Arcos is a photographer born in Guayaquil, Ecuador. Since the age of 19, he has been exploring documentary photography and video, and photojournalism, focusing on social and environmental issues.
- Arcos has worked for several newspapers in Ecuador and has contributed to international publications, including *Slate France*, *World Policy Journal*, *The New York Times*, and many more. He has also undertaken assignments for Reuters, *The Wall Street Journal*, Smithsonian Journeys, UNICEF, UNHCR, Hivos, ECHO, *Volkskrant*, *Der Spiegel*, and *Audubon*.
- In 2013, he was selected for the Magnum Foundation NYU/MF Photography and Human Rights program and received first prize at POY Latam the same year. In 2014 and 2016, he participated in the New York Portfolio Review.

Context

- In 2019, Ecuador was considered one of the safest countries in Latin America with a homicide rate of 6.7 per 100,000 inhabitants.
- According to official data from the National Police of Ecuador, [between January and December 2025, 9,161 intentional homicides were recorded, a 30% increase compared to 2024](#). The national rate reached 50.6 violent deaths per 100,000 inhabitants.
- [95.4% of the deaths are classified as criminal violence](#), directly associated with organised crime, territorial control disputes, and illicit economies linked to drug trafficking.
- On the night of 8 December 2024, a group of children and adolescents were heading back to their homes in the Las Malvinas community in the south of Guayaquil after a football game when they were stopped by a group of soldiers from the Ecuadorian Air Force and violently pursued.
- [On December 24th 2024, four charred, dismembered bodies were found near a military base in Taura, close to the site of their detention](#).
- Since 2024, Ecuador's prisons have become sites of systematic torture, widely denounced by international bodies such as the United Nations Committee Against Torture. At least 600 prisoners died from health and nutrition-related issues at the Litoral Prison alone.
- Despite making up only 4.8% of the population, a figure that Black movements argue is underestimated, Afro-Ecuadorians are among the most affected by President Daniel Noboa's year-old mano dura (iron fist) security policy against organised crime.

Jury Notes

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

Visual Thinking: State Power and Military Overreach in Photographs.
See page 40 of See the Story 2026.



Milei's Argentina

Tadeo Bourbon

Argentina
for *Revista Mu*

Milei's Argentina

Tadeo Bourbon

Photographer

- Tadeo Bourbon is a documentary photographer from Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- He studied photojournalism at the ARGRA School in Buenos Aires and completed a master's degree in documentary photography at the Centro de la Imagen in Lima, Peru. He has participated in workshops and training programs with photographers and collectives, including Eduardo Longoni and Sub Coop. Bourbon is a member of Colectivo Triada with Juan Valeiro and Lucia Prieto.
- In 2020, his project Pecati: Forced Sterilizations in Peru was exhibited at the Lugar de la Memoria in Lima.

Context

- On taking power, Milei implemented a series of austerity measures, including slashing energy and transportation subsidies, laying off tens of thousands of government workers, freezing public infrastructure projects, and imposing [wage and pension freezes](#) below inflation.
- Almost half of Argentina's 7.8 million retirees receive the minimum pension and a bonus that together amount to \$260. [This is less than a third of the basic basket of goods for the elderly.](#)
- Since December 2024, in order to maintain full coverage, beneficiaries must meet several requirements: they cannot have private health insurance, they cannot own a recent vehicle, they cannot own more than one property, and their income must be less than 1.5 times the minimum wage. Many were automatically excluded.
- On March 12, 2025, hundreds of pensioners gathered outside Argentina's National Congress in Buenos Aires, calling for improvements to their pensions and access to free medicines. [More than 120 people were detained, and at least 45 were injured.](#)
- The cartridge hit Grillo on the head, causing a severe brain injury. Human Rights Watch confirmed that the security force official shot Grillo from just over 50 meters away.
- Federal police tear-gassed and threw Fathers Jorge 'Chueco' Romero and Paco Oliveira to the ground.
- Security Minister Bullrich said that the administration of President Javier Milei would not investigate security forces' role in the March 12 protest, and praised them for "protecting democracy, institutions, and citizens."

Jury Notes

- 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.

Visual Thinking: Photographing politics. See page 39 of See the Story 2026.



Those Who Carry the Dead *Eduardo Anizelli*

Brazil
Folha de S.Paulo

Those Who Carry the Dead

Eduardo Anizelli

Photographer

- Eduardo Anizelli is a photojournalist who studied journalism at the Universidade Norte do Paraná in Brazil and began his career as a photojournalist at the newspaper *Folha de Londrina*.
- He later worked as a freelance photographer for *O Estado de S.Paulo* and Getty Images. In 2008, he joined *Folha de S.Paulo* as a freelancer and became a staff photographer in 2012, a position he continues to hold.
- Anizelli's work has received several recognitions, including being a finalist for the Esso Journalism Award in 2013 and receiving an Honorable Mention from the Vladimir Herzog Award for Amnesty and Human Rights in 2024. He won the Folha Journalism Award in the photography category in 2015, 2019, 2024, and 2026.
- His photographs have been published in leading Brazilian newspapers and magazines and internationally in outlets including *The New York Times* and *Life* magazine.

Context

- "Operation Containment" targeted members of the organisation Red Command (Comando Vermelho) – one of Brazil's largest criminal organisations. It was ordered by Rio's right-wing governor, Cláudio Castro.
- Launched just before dawn on 28 October and lasted 17 hours. The number reported is often around 120, but France24 states: The death toll from military-style police raids on drug gangs in Rio de Janeiro has risen, with the state public defender's office reporting 132 people killed and state police reporting 119 deaths.
- The title of the project refers to the families that had to retrieve the bodies of their deceased relatives after the attack.
- Ultimately, the police only apprehended 20 of the 100 people whose arrest warrants had precipitated the operation.
- [Of those 100 earmarked for arrest, the police only managed to arrest 17 people. Scores of others were arrested for on-the-spot infractions.](#)
- When BBC Brasil cross-checked the list of the deceased published by the police against the 68 names on the list of suspects provided by prosecutors, [it found that none of them matched.](#)
- The operation was the largest ever carried out by Rio's security forces and saw 2,500 officers deployed to the Alemão and Penha neighbourhoods.
- [In 2024, Rio de Janeiro police killed 703 people](#), official data show. They killed another 470 from January through August 2025. Of those killed in 2024, 86% were Black.
- [Amnesty International called the attack "extrajudicial"](#): "People in the favelas live under a constant state of alert and threat. Police operations in Brazil have become synonymous with terror, racism and a total lack of protection," said Jurema Werneck, executive director at Amnesty International Brazil.
- [There was widespread domestic support](#) for the police actions: "A nationwide survey by AtlasIntel published on Friday showed 55% of Brazilians backed the police operation, with support rising to 62% among residents of Rio state." Claudio Castro's approval rating rose 10 points following the operation.



Those Who Carry the Dead

Eduardo Anizelli

Jury Notes

- 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.

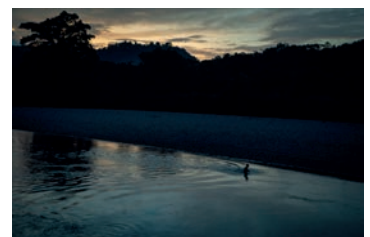
Visual Thinking: State Power and Military Overreach in Photographs.
See page 40 of See the Story 2026.



Manacillos: A Return to Life

Ever Andrés Mercado Puentes

Colombia



Manacillos: A Return to Life

Ever Andrés Mercado Puentes

Photographer

- Ever Andrés Mercado Puentes is an Afro-Colombian documentary photographer born in Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca, Colombia. His work focuses on human rights, peacebuilding initiatives, and the cultural heritage of Colombia's mid-Pacific region, as well as the search for missing persons and the relationship between people, their environment, and daily life.
- Mercado Puentes has collaborated with media outlets including *The Guardian*, *El País América – Colombia*, *El Espectador*, *El Cuarto Mosquetero*, *Semana Rural*, and Reuters.
- He has also worked with organisations including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women, Plan International Colombia, and Caritas Peru.

Context

- Colombia has one of the largest Afro-descendant populations in Latin America. According to a post-census survey, the government estimates that Afro-Colombians constitute 10 per cent of the total population, approximately 4.67 million Afro descendants.
- There are 13 settlements in the river basin, home to approximately 4,000 residents, mostly descendants of enslaved Africans and maroons brought to work in the mines between the 17th and 19th centuries.
- [The 1991 Constitution that Law 70 recognized them as owners of the lands they had inhabited for centuries. However, only in 2000 that the State, through the Colombian Institute for Agrarian Reform \(Incora\), granted them collective land titles.](#)
- Despite intimidation, the Afro community of Yurumanguí comes together to celebrate the Manacillos festival every Holy Week. This ancestral and unique ritual originated in Juntas, the uppermost village on the river, as an act of cultural resilience. During the festival, no one is allowed to work in the artisanal gold mines or the agricultural fields in the jungle.
- In Juntas, the memory of slavery is alive. The Manacillos hold profound spiritual significance, reaffirming their African roots and resisting colonialism and imposed Catholicism through [syncretism](#), creating a new collective cultural identity. Syncretic practices are very common in Latin America.
- The Manacillos hold profound spiritual significance, reaffirming their African roots and resisting colonialism and imposed Catholicism through syncretism, creating a new collective cultural identity.

Jury Notes

- 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 of 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.

Visual Thinking: Celebrating the present and lighting up the past. See page 46 of See the Story.



Name the Absence

Ferley A. Ospina

Colombia

Name the Absence

Ferley A. Ospina

Photographer

- Ferley A. Ospina is a photographer based in Cúcuta, on the border between Colombia and Venezuela, working in photojournalism and documentary photography. His work focuses on the Colombian–Venezuelan border and the Catatumbo region, documenting the human impact of migration and armed conflict in northeastern Colombia, an area long affected by displacement and violence.
- Ospina has collaborated with international media, including *El País*, Bloomberg, Reuters, Associated Press, *Le Figaro*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Information*, *El Espectador*, *Semana Rural*, and *CeroSetenta*. He has worked with organisations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), Páramo Films, and the European Union Election Observation Mission in Colombia.

Context

- Ferley began this deeply personal project in 2024 after realising, during a family Christmas gathering, how many men were absent from his family due to the long history of violence in his region. Raised by a single mother, he recognised this as a shared experience across many families in northeastern Colombia and South America.
- Through photographs of small moments, shadows, light, and family spaces, he explores the emotional and systemic absence of men, approaching the subject with a poetic, introspective visual language shaped by memory and childhood.
- The project became both an act of personal reflection and a healing process, using photography to make visible forms of grief and absence that are often difficult to articulate.
- Latin America and the Caribbean have the [highest rate of lone-parent households in the world](#) (11 percent), of which the vast majority are lone mothers. The official statistics on the reasons behind the prevalence of single-mother households in Colombia point towards the high divorce and separation rates, as well as a high number of children conceived out of wedlock ([84%, the highest rate internationally](#)). Nevertheless, many children also grow up in single-mother households due to violence and conflict in the region.
- [The results indicate that 11% of Colombian children do not live with either parent, 27% live with one parent, and only 62% live with both parents. In fact, only 20% of Colombian adults are married, and the country has the lowest marriage rate in the world.](#)
- Norte de Santander is a region in Colombia that has been marked by conflict.
 - In January 2025, [the Guardian reported on an outburst of conflict in the region of Norte de Santander, driven by the desire to control the cocaine market:](#)
 - 80 killed, dozens kidnapped, and thousands displaced as rebel groups try to take hold of one of Colombia's 'cocaine hubs'.
- The origin of the ongoing violence can be traced back to the assassination of a left-wing politician that resulted in a political riot and 18 years of political conflict known as [La Violencia](#). During the years of La Violencia (1946–1964), around 200,000 people were killed.



Name the Absence

Ferley A. Ospina

Jury Notes

- 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.

Visual Thinking: What can photographs of daily life tell about conflict?
See page 34 of See the Story.



The Human Cost of Agrotoxins

Pablo E. Piovano

Argentina

Manuel Rivera-Ortiz Foundation, Philip Jones Griffiths Foundation, Lawen.doc



The Human Cost of Agrotoxins

Pablo E. Piovano

Photographer

- Pablo Ernesto Piovano is a documentary photographer and filmmaker from Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- Across his career, Piovano has collaborated with international media such as *Geo*, *Stern*, *Liberation*, *L'Espresso*, *Bloomberg*, and others.
- He has won numerous awards, including the Henri Nannen Prize (2018), Greenpeace award (2018), Philip Jones Griffiths Foundation award (2017), The Manuel Rivera Ortiz Foundation award (2016), among others. In 2023, he won the National Geographic Explorer Level II Grant.
- Piovano's work has been exhibited in museums and festivals across Europe. He is the author of the book 'The Human Cost of Agrotoxins', which was published by Kehrer Verlag, Germany in 2017.

Context

- In 1996, Argentina's Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food (SADPyA) formally authorized the commercial introduction of Roundup Ready (RR) soybeans. These were genetically modified to be resistant to glyphosate, a broad-spectrum herbicide.
- The RR soybeans were introduced by Monsanto, a major American agricultural biotechnology corporation, famously acquired by Bayer in 2018 for approximately USD \$63 billion. They are known for developing Roundup (glyphosate) and genetically modified (GMO) seeds, and became highly controversial due to:
 - Environmental impacts
 - Patent litigations
 - Cancer-related lawsuits regarding its herbicide products
- The RR soybeans allowed farmers to spray fields with glyphosate-based herbicides to control weeds without damaging the crop itself.
- [2026 document](#) states that total pesticide use in Argentina has increased from approximately 35 million liters to 580 million kg/Lt (it appears that kg and liters are often treated equivalently in agrochemical usage statistics) over the last 30 years
- [Pesticide residues have been detected in fresh water bodies, indoor home dust \(including in urban residences of non-farming households\), rain, drinking water and human \(fecal and urine\) samples.](#)
- [December 2024:](#) Legislature of Entre Ríos passed Law 26.117. Among other things, it sets buffer zones where spraying with drones or manually carried equipment can occur as close as 10 meters from populated areas, with larger distances for other equipment.
- [In 2026, the EU-Mercosur trade agreement between the European Union and many Latin American nations is supposed to take place,](#) and the discussion around pesticides is at the centre of this debate, as experts and environmental organisations are concerned about the risks that may arise across Latin America as the accord goes into effect.



The Human Cost of Agrotoxins

Pablo E. Piovano

- Greenpeace also stresses that, under the new agreement, Mercosur member countries could increase their use of pesticides.
- Several major pesticide companies are European. They include Germany's BASF, whose 98 Brazilian products contain 19 substances considered "highly hazardous," and Bayer, also from Germany, with 71 products with 22 substances listed in the same category. These "highly hazardous" products point to a serious regulatory problem looming on the near horizon: Some pesticides cannot be sold in Europe due to their toxicity, but their production and export outside European borders are not subject to the same barriers.

Jury Notes

- 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.

Visual Thinking: How can photographers communicate the impact of politics on people's lives? See page 41 of See the Story.

West, Central,
and South Asia



Nepal's Gen Z Uprising

Narendra Shrestha

Nepal
EPA Images

Nepal's Gen Z Uprising

Narendra Shrestha

Photographer

- Narendra Shrestha studied at the International Institute of Journalism in Berlin, Germany, and began his career working for several national daily and weekly publications before joining the European Pressphoto Agency (EPA) in 2003.
- Born and based in Nepal, he has spent over two decades documenting the country's social and political movements. Shrestha has documented key moments in Nepal's recent history, including the Maoist insurgency (1996–2005) and the People's Uprising in 2006.

Context

- Singha Durbar, shown ablaze in this photograph, is a central government complex in Kathmandu, surrounded by major landmarks and key financial and state institutions.
- The fire and storming of the iconic building followed the earlier resignation of Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli that same day, after two days of tumultuous protests that left [76 dead and thousands injured](#).
- Most of those killed and injured were young demonstrators. With [youth unemployment above 20% and more than 1,500 people leaving the country each day in search of work](#), many young Nepalis had long been frustrated with government leadership.
- Dissatisfaction escalated into [mass demonstrations after the government banned 26 social media platforms on September 4, 2025](#). The ban came amid growing scrutiny from younger citizens, particularly over the perceived lavish lifestyles of politicians' children.
- What began as peaceful, student-led protests intensified as clashes with police grew increasingly violent. In the aftermath, protest leaders worked with the military to appoint Sushila Karki as interim prime minister. Known for her integrity in cases involving corruption and constitutional law, she became Nepal's first female head of government. Elections were scheduled for March 2026.
- On March 5, the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), led by Balendra Shah, a 35-year-old [engineer-turned-rapper](#) and Kathmandu's first independent mayor, won a sweeping parliamentary majority. His music had long reflected the grievances driving the protests; his song *Nepal Haseko* ("Nepal Smiling") drew more than 10 million YouTube views during the unrest.
- In a country where over 40% of the population is under 35, yet political leaders have often remained in their 70s for decades, his victory marked a clear generational shift.

Jury Notes

- 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.

Visual Thinking: Picturing conflict.
See page 32 of *See the story 2026*



Aid Emergency in Gaza

Saber Nuraldin

Palestine
EPA Images

Aid Emergency in Gaza

Saber Nuraldin

Photographer

- Saber Nuraldin is a photographer from Gaza, Palestine. He began his career at the age of 17 working with Agence France-Presse (AFP).
- In 2003, he joined the European Pressphoto Agency (EPA) as a staff photographer, covering news in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian Territories. His work has documented major events in the region, including the Second Intifada, Israel's withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip, and multiple wars between Israel and Gaza. He has also reported on the conflict in Egypt in 2013.

Context

- Palestinians climb onto an aid truck as it enters the Gaza Strip via the Zikim Crossing in an attempt to get flour, during what the Israeli military called a “tactical suspension” in operations to allow humanitarian aid through.
- In 2025, famine took hold amid what an [independent UN Human Rights Commission inquiry](#) has concluded is a genocide in Gaza. Israel disputes this. In March of 2025, Israeli authorities imposed a complete aid blockade. This is a tactic described by humanitarian organisations as the [weaponization of starvation](#).
- After international pressure, aid blocks were partially lifted in May. Most aid deliveries went through the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), established by the US and Israel to bypass the UN-led aid system, and put military personnel in charge.
- This operation was widely condemned by global human rights and legal organisations as unethical and in violation of international law. The [UN reports](#) that between late May and early October, at least 2,435 Palestinians were [killed seeking food at or near GHF collection points](#). The GHF shut down when a fragile ceasefire went into effect in October.
- Despite some aid entering Gaza, core famine indicators such as food consumption and acute malnutrition levels are worsening in the region, [particularly affecting children and the elderly](#).

Jury Notes

- 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, were the result of an Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip and were a defining humanitarian issue of 2025.
- 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

A Daughter's Grief in Kashmir

Yasir Iqbal

Photographer

- Yasir Iqbal is a photojournalist from Kashmir, India. After studying tourism, he began his career in photography in 2007 when he joined a local newspaper, developing his practice after initially pursuing drawing and portrait sketching.
- Iqbal's photographs have appeared in outlets including *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times Lens Blog*, and *WirtschaftsWoche*. After a brief stint with Reuters, he has worked for organisations such as *The Telegraph*, *Fortune India*, *India Today*, and *Business Today*.
- He previously served as Deputy Chief Photographer at India Today magazine before leaving the position in 2022 to work independently. He is currently based in Kashmir and works as a consultant photographer for *Outlook India* magazine.

Context

- Sanam Bashir, 21, collapses after her mother, Nargis Begum, 45, was taken for her last rites. Begum died from injuries sustained in a mortar shell explosion as the mother and daughter were fleeing their home in Uri, in Indian-administered Jammu and [Kashmir](#). Begum was a mother of six and the breadwinner of the family.
- On 22 April 2025, gunmen opened fire on tourists in Pahalgam, killing 26 people. India blamed Pakistan-backed militants and carried out strikes on 7 May, prompting a military response from Pakistan.
- Four days of cross-border shelling, drone attacks, and airstrikes followed along the Line of Control (the de facto border between India and Pakistan-administered areas) in Kashmir, displacing thousands and killing dozens of civilians.
- A ceasefire was reached on 10 May under international pressure, amid [concerns over escalation](#) between the two nuclear-armed countries.
- The Kashmir region has been contested between India and Pakistan [since the 1947 partition of British India](#). A war over the territory broke out that year, and a UN-mandated referendum on its status was never held due to disagreements over troop withdrawals and political conditions. The dispute has since fueled decades of conflict between the two countries.

Jury Notes

- 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 dramatisation, 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.

Visual Thinking: Picturing conflict.
See page 32 of See the story 2026



“I’m Afraid”: Afghan Women Face US Aid Cuts *Elise Blanchard*

France
for *Time*

“I’m Afraid”: Afghan Women Face US Aid Cuts

Elise Blanchard

Photographer

- Elise Blanchard is a freelance photojournalist who was based in Afghanistan for over seven years. Her work focuses on the impact of war, particularly on women and girls, humanitarian crises, climate change, extremism, and the Taliban’s governance.
- Blanchard worked for the Agence France-Presse (AFP) bureau in Kabul for two years, covering the fall of Afghanistan in 2021, before returning to freelance reporting. She continues to document life in the country, particularly in remote areas, with recent work focusing on access to maternal healthcare.
- She has also done in-depth reporting from rebel-held areas in Myanmar and from Ukraine, while still travelling regularly to Afghanistan for assignments.
- Blanchard received the UNICEF Photo of the Year Award in 2025. Her work has been shown in group exhibitions across Europe, and a book based on her recent work is scheduled for publication in 2026.

Context

- This series shows the vital conditions that women’s healthcare clinics, workers, and patients face in Afghanistan after President Donald Trump signed an executive order freezing nearly all US foreign aid, leading to the suspension or closure of [422 health facilities in Afghanistan](#).
- Justifying the cuts, a senior Trump Administration official cited reports of attempts to disrupt aid by the country’s Taliban authorities.
- In the remote province of Daikundi, pregnant women lost access to local midwives, their only source of care in communities hours from the nearest hospital and isolated by snow for months every year.
- Many were left with no choice but to give birth at home, in a country with [one of the world’s highest maternal mortality rates](#). The distance between hospitals and homes also means that many young babies and children die without accessing proper care. At some clinics, midwives continued working without salary or supplies, unable to abandon the women they cared for.
- This crisis compounds an already critical situation. [Shortly after returning to power in 2021](#), the Taliban banned girls from studying beyond primary school; women were subsequently barred from universities, and a December 2024 decree extended these restrictions specifically to medical education, preventing a new generation from training as health workers at a time of urgent need.
- While the story focuses on the consequences in Afghanistan, it is good to understand that these cuts are affecting over [130 countries in the world](#).
- According to the [Center for Global Development](#) could contribute to as many as 500,000 to 700,000 additional deaths annually. In this [website](#), you can explore a world map to see a sample of how cuts to foreign assistance impact communities around the world.



“I’m Afraid”: Afghan Women Face US Aid Cuts

Elise Blanchard

Jury Notes

- 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.

Visual Thinking: Photographing politics.
See page 39 of See the story 2026



A Syrian City Rebuilds, Still Divided

Nicole Tung

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

A Syrian City Rebuilds, Still Divided

Nicole Tung

Photographer

- Nicole Tung is an American photojournalist born and raised in Hong Kong. Based in Istanbul, Turkey, she works as a freelancer for international publications and NGOs, primarily covering the Middle East.
- Her work often explores those most affected by conflict and the consequences of war, including migration across the Middle East, post-traumatic stress in Native American veterans, human rights abuses, and women's rights.
- In recent years, she has followed the pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong, the legacy of ISIS, and, since 2022, has documented the Russian invasion of Ukraine for *Harper's Magazine*, *The Washington Post*, and *The New York Times*.

Context

- Residents of Deir al-Zour are photographed amidst their battered city. Protests against the regime of Bashar al-Assad began in 2011 and were met with violent repression, arrests, and shootings. The region was one of the first cities to rise up during the revolution.
- Over the following years, control of the city shifted repeatedly between government forces, opposition groups, ISIS, and Kurdish-led forces backed by different international actors, leaving the city deeply fragmented between the supporters of different groups.
- By the end of the conflict, around 75% of Deir al-Zour's infrastructure had been destroyed. Residents returning home have since faced the slow and difficult process of rebuilding amid widespread destruction, limited resources, and the constant danger of unexploded ordnance.
- According to [a report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#), explosive remnants of war (ERWs) and unexploded ordnance (UXOs) remain a major danger across Syria, with over 1,000 casualties reported since 8 December 2024, including a significant proportion of children. Many incidents occur during daily activities such as farming and herding, highlighting the continued civilian risk. Deir ez-Zor is one of the most heavily affected areas, accounting for roughly a quarter of all explosive ordnance incidents in the country.
- Even after major territorial shifts following the [fall of the Assad regime in December 2024](#) and a ceasefire in January 2026, recovery remains uneven. Efforts to restore basic services and clear rubble have begun, but the city's reconstruction continues to be shaped by the scale of its devastation and years of political division.

Jury Notes

- 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 centring 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-centred approach.

Visual Thinking: What can photography of daily life tell us about conflict?
See more on page 34 of *See the story 2026*.



Witnessing Gaza

Saher Alghorra

Palestine
for *The New York Times*



Witnessing Gaza

Saher Alghorra

Photographer

- Saher Alghorra is a Palestinian photojournalist documenting life and conflict in Gaza. He studied public relations, media, and photography at the University of Palestine and began photographing in 2017 after receiving his first camera from his father. Initially, his work focused on everyday life in Gaza City.
- As the war reshaped Gaza, his focus shifted to bearing witness to destruction, resilience, and survival, using his photography to convey the realities on the ground to a global audience.
- Since 2021, Alghorra's photographs have been published in international outlets including *The Associated Press*, *Die Zeit*, *The Guardian*, and *Time*. In 2025, he began contributing regularly to *The New York Times*.

Context

- This story bears witness to the suffering, resilience, and survival of civilians in Gaza. Photographed across the Gaza Strip between March and October 2025, the work reveals the fear, displacement, famine, and loss experienced daily.
- In 2025, civilians in Gaza endured starvation, famine, and relentless bombardment as the death toll surpassed [75,000 people](#) and Israeli authorities severely restricted the flow of humanitarian aid.
- Palestinian journalists – living through the reality they document – are the world's few witnesses to what an [independent UN Human Rights Commission inquiry](#) has concluded is a genocide. Israel disputes this.
- [At least 94 journalists](#) were killed while carrying out their work across 15 countries in 2025. More than half of those deaths occurred in Palestine, and the [Committee to Protect Journalists](#) (CPJ) states that Israel has committed more targeted killings of journalists than any other government's military since records began in 1992.
- The photographer, who continues to report from Gaza, worked under immense danger, driven by a refusal to let the world turn away. "Even when everything around me told me to stop, I couldn't – silence would mean surrender."

Jury Notes

- This project offers a powerful and carefully edited record of the war in Gaza and the daily struggles of its people. 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.

Visual Thinking: Picturing conflict. See more on page 32 of [See the story 2026](#).

Do we need to see graphic imagery to understand what is happening in the world?
See more on page 33 of [See the story 2026](#).

Sole eyes on the ground: What is it like to work as a journalist in Gaza?
See more on page 49 of [See the story 2026](#).



Hijacked Education

Diego Ibarra Sánchez

Spain



Hijacked Education

Diego Ibarra Sánchez

Photographer

- Diego Ibarra Sánchez is a Spanish documentary photographer and filmmaker based in Lebanon, covering the Middle East.
- He has documented key global conflicts, including the wars in Syria, Ukraine, Iraq, and Lebanon, the Yazidi genocide, the war against polio, and humanitarian crises such as the floods in Pakistan and earthquakes in Türkiye and Nepal.
- Previously, he lived for nearly five years in Pakistan and has worked in Afghanistan and Nigeria.
- Since 2012, he has been a regular contributor to *The New York Times*. He collaborates with major organisations, including UNICEF and UNHCR, is a Canon Spain PRO MASTER, and a lecturer in visual storytelling.
- His photobook *The Phoenician Collapse* (2022), which explores Lebanon's deterioration, earned international acclaim, including Best Independent Book of 2022 by the Lucie Foundation.

Context

- Despite the [Safe Schools Declaration](#), signed by 121 states and aimed at protecting education during armed conflict, attacks on schools, teachers, and students continue to rise.
- Since 2011, the photographer – son of a teacher and father of an 11-year-old – has documented this reality across nine countries, from Western and South Asia to Europe and South America. The series shows Taliban-controlled classrooms in Pakistan and Afghanistan, to bombed schools in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Ukraine, and to displaced communities in Colombia.
- According to a [2025 Save the Children analysis of UN data](#), there were 2,445 attacks on schools in 2024, nearly three times the 790 recorded in 2020.
- These attacks included the killing and abduction of teachers and students, airstrikes on schools, the occupation of schools by armed groups, and sexual violence against students within educational facilities.
- The consequences of this reality extend far beyond the classroom, impacting physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development with lasting effects. The toll on children's self-esteem, confidence, and sense of security is immeasurable and often invisible.

Jury Notes

- The work offers a globally resonant account of how education and daily life shape the next generation in the aftermath of conflict.

Visual Thinking:

How do photographers address ethics in their practice?

See more on page 28 of [See the story 2026](#).

Picturing conflict.

See more on page 32 of [See the story 2026](#).