



Nominations for the Simon Wiesenthal Prize 2022

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The Simon Wiesenthal Prize 2022 has garnered extensive national and international attention. The prize, established in 2021 on the initiative of National Council President Wolfgang Sobotka, is awarded annually to up to three persons or groups.

A total of 263 applications from 33 countries worldwide were submitted to the National Fund this year, including submissions from Israel, the USA, Argentina, Peru and South Africa in addition to national and European projects. Each of these many worldwide projects sends a strong message in the fight against antisemitism and to educate people about the Holocaust, Sobotka emphasised. The winners will be announced during an event held at the Parliament on 13 March 2023.

Simon Wiesenthal (1908-2005) made a defining contribution to the worldwide reckoning with the crimes of the Nazis. From the day of his liberation from Mauthausen concentration camp, he made it his life's work to remember the victims of Nazi atrocities. The prize is intended to honour the memory of the architect, publicist and writer Simon Wiesenthal.

Sobotka: Honouring Contemporary Eyewitnesses is of Special Importance

The jury and Wolfgang Sobotka especially wanted to honour the contemporary eyewitnesses who were nominated for the award. By telling the world about their experiences they are providing the most inspiring and vital testimony for efforts to come to terms with the crimes the Holocaust and counteract antisemitism. The following contemporary eyewitnesses will receive special recognition at the event: Wanda Albińska (Poland), Lucia Heilman (Austria), Tsvi Herschel (Israel) and Jackie Young (Great Britain).

Entries and nominations could be submitted using the online application form on the Simon Wiesenthal Prize website www.wiesenthalpreis.at, available in German and English. The Simon Wiesenthal Prize is awarded in the categories "Civic engagement to combat antisemitism" (€7,500) and "Civic engagement to educate the public about the Holocaust" (€7,500). In addition, a main prize is awarded as an award for "Special civic engagement to combat antisemitism and educate the public about the Holocaust", which is endowed with 15,000 €.

Schnurbein Honours Civic Engagement to Combat Antisemitism and Foster Remembrance of the Shoah

"It is not possible to overestimate the importance of civic engagement to combat antisemitism and foster remembrance of the Shoah," says Katharina von Schnurbein, Antisemitism Officer of the European Commission and Chair of the Simon Wiesenthal Prize jury, in praise of the initiatives taking part. "It takes a lot of time, assertiveness and tenacity." The Simon Wiesenthal Prize contributes to their visibility by shining a light on their achievements. In addition, the award offers project organisers a valuable opportunity to network, Schnurbein added.

The National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism, established at the National Council, is responsible for awarding the prize. The Board of Trustees, chaired by the President of the National Council, decides on the basis of a shortlist drawn up by a six-member jury. The nominees are listed in alphabetical order.

Nominations for the Main Prize

This year, the Simon Wiesenthal Prize jury nominated the following projects for the main prize for special civic engagement to combat antisemitism and educate the public about the Holocaust: The Spanish village of Castrillo Matajudios – which translates as "Camp Kill Jews" – had officially changed its name back to the pre-1632 name Castrillo Mota de Judios ("Jews' Mound Camp") after a referendum and the approval of the regional government. The village of about 50 inhabitants had voted for the name change last year, the panel said.

Also nominated was LIKRAT, a dialogue project that brings together Jewish and non-Jewish young people. In workshops and seminars, Jewish youths aged 14 to 18 are trained to go to non-Jewish schools and talk about their Jewish identity, religion, Israel, Jewish history and the Shoah. This creates an open dialogue about Judaism, young person to young person. This communication between peers leads to the breakdown of stereotypical perceptions and enables taboos and misunderstandings to be addressed. This was the jury's reason for the nomination.

The nominees also include the Swedish Committee Against Antisemitism, which has been working for 25 years to prevent and counteract antisemitism by means of information and education. As an NGO, the organisation is not affiliated with any political or religious groups and is one of the few organisations in Sweden dealing with the issue, the jury explained. The committee follows public debate and the media closely, it does important educational work and provides information and teaching materials and organises lectures by experts.

Zikaron BaSalon ("Remembrance in the Living Room") is an Israeli initiative in which private individuals invite people into their living rooms and give Shoah survivors the opportunity to share their memories and pass on their experiences. The personal encounter in living rooms creates an environment that often makes it possible for survivors to talk about their memories for the first time, the jury said.

Prize for Engagement to Combat Antisemitism

The jury nominated the Association for Democracy and Information, among others, for the other prize for civic engagement to combat antisemitism. The association has been engaged in the fight against antisemitism, against the distortion of history and against hate propaganda since 2017. The nominees also include the European Janusz Korczak Academy – a Jewish educational institution in Germany – and Professor Mohammed S. Dajani, who has made a fundamental contribution towards raising historical awareness.

Prize for Educating People About the Holocaust

The nominations for civic engagement to educate the public about the Holocaust were equally diverse. Nominees included Waltraud Barton: the Association IM-MER, founded by Barton, has set itself the task of preserving the memory of the more than 10,000 Austrians deported to Minsk and Maly Trostinec during the Second World War and murdered in the greater Minsk area.

The jury also shortlisted the Alpine Peace Crossing and the Secondary Witnesses Association. The Secondary Witnesses concept sensitises people to antisemitism and racism. Above all, it aims to encourage young people to pass on the stories of contemporary eyewitnesses as secondary witnesses.

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