

Istanbul Photo Awards 2026 - Winners

Category: [News](#)

Website: <https://graphiccompetitions.com/>



The Istanbul Photo Awards 2026, one of the leading international news photography contests organized by Anadolu, has announced the winners of its 12th edition. The awards celebrate outstanding visual journalism, recognizing powerful storytelling across news, sports, nature and environment, portrait, and daily life photography.

An esteemed international jury of photographers and visual media experts evaluated the 2026 entries. The jury included National Geographic photographer and Vital Impacts founder Ami Vitale, photojournalists Carol Guzy, Yuri Kozyrev, Goran Tomasevic, Cameron Spencer, Ahmet Sel, Firat Yurdakul, Nicole Tung, and Muhammed Muheisen. Their selections honored images and stories with strong journalistic value, emotional force, and technical excellence.

The prestigious Photo of the Year was awarded to Palestinian photographer Haitham Imad for "Gaza, No Hope," shot for EPA in Gaza. The image shows 2-year-old Sham Qudeih being held by her mother at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, capturing the human toll of Gaza's deepening humanitarian crisis.

Associated Press photographer Jihad Alshrafi won Story News with "Eternal Death," a series addressing hunger and survival in Gaza. In sports, Alex Whitehead won Single Sports with "Crash," documenting a collision during the 2025 UCI Track Cycling World Championships in Chile, while Tariq Zaidi won Story Sports for his work on Nuba wrestling and cultural resilience in Sudan.

Olesya Kurpyayeva earned Single Nature & Environment for "Baby Mammoth Yana," photographed for AFP in Russia, and Josh Edelson won Story Nature & Environment for his coverage of the California wildfires for AFP.

In the portrait categories, The New York Times photographer Saher Alghorra won Single Portrait with "Severe Malnutrition," a stark portrait from Palestine's hunger crisis. Arez Ghaderi won Story Portrait with "Lost Childhood," a series on children working in brick kilns in Afghanistan.

Spanish photographer Diego Ibarra received two first prizes: Single Daily Life for "Education in Afghanistan," showing Afghan girls attending an informal open-air school, and Story Daily Life for "Reimagining Syria," photographed for The New York Times.

In addition to the first-place winners, the competition recognized exceptional second- and third-place photographs across the single-image categories, highlighting the depth and range of this year's submissions.

Further story-category honors went to Saher Alghorra and Luis Tato in Story News; Ryan Pierse and Javier Arcenillas in Story Sports; Fiorella Baldisseri and Ernesto Benavides in Story Nature & Environment; Sasha Maslov and Matin Hashemi in Story Portrait; and Tariq Zaidi and Kyung-Hoon Kim in Story Daily Life.

The 2026 edition received nearly 19,000 photographs from professional photographers worldwide. In total, 26 photographers received awards across 10 categories, with \$58,000 awarded across 30 prizes. The winning photographs will be featured in international exhibitions and in the annual Istanbul Photo Awards album.

The Istanbul Photo Awards continues to stand as a major platform for global photojournalism, presenting images that document conflict, crisis, resilience, culture, and daily life with urgency and depth.