WORLD PRESS PHOTO

TECHNICAL REPORT
2024 CONTEST

Foreword

This report is designed to enable informed conversation within our community of professional photojournalists and documentary photographers.

Our commitment to transparency means we analyze and make public data on the contest related to diversity, representation, and verification. This report is designed to enable informed conversation within our community of professional photojournalism and documentary photography and is not intended to be a comprehensive presentation of all aspects of the relevant issues.

2024 is a year of reflection and change at World Press Photo. Reflecting on the results from the implementation of our regional strategy, we have used these learnings to work towards a more global and better geographic balance of perspectives.

As the world gets smaller and more interdependent, we need mutual understanding that can foster dialogue that breaks through polarization. Accurate, diverse and trustworthy photojournalism and documentary photography has a vital role to play.

We know that our impact comes with responsibility and there are groups and voices that have been historically underrepresented in our contest. Improving this is crucial to us, and we are committed to working with our community to better fulfill our mission of connecting the world to high quality and diverse visual storytelling.

The World Press Photo Foundation and the World Press Photo Contest

The annual World Press Photo Contest is one of the World Press Photo Foundation's most important and best-known programs.

The contest recognizes and celebrates the best photojournalism and documentary photography produced over the past year. The Singles, Stories and Long-Term Projects categories showcase single frame photographs, while the Open Format category welcomes photography that incorporates additional, innovative techniques. Entries are judged in terms of their accurate and visually compelling insights about our world.

The foundation sets the contest categories and rules, requires entrants to accept the contest code of ethics, and selects the jury. Once appointed, the regional jury, global jury chair, and secretary work independently from the foundation to select the winning entries. World Press Photo staff members do not have influence over the judging nor voting powers.

With our regional strategy, the judging process involves regional juries and a global jury. In each of the six regions of our contest model, a selection of entries per category is made by a regional jury, composed of professionals from and/or working in that region, with a range of expertise.

Once the regional juries have made their selection, the entries are passed on to the global jury who will choose the 24 regional and four global winners.

Once the winners have been selected and announced, they are showcased via the foundation's website, social media channels, annual exhibition and yearbook. World Press Photo's reach allows for millions of people globally to see these winning images, sometimes for the first time.

As a global platform, the foundation has the responsibility to present the best, most accurate and compelling work, even though the foundation has not directly chosen this work. Without restricting the jury's decisions, the foundation asks the jury to consider the following when deliberating on the entries:

- Whether the photographs and stories under consideration reinforce or challenge stereotypes.

- Whether graphic and violent photographs are appropriate for the story presented, especially when they involve vulnerable people and/or groups.

- Must ensure that consent has been appropriately handled, with consideration for relevant local and international laws and for the ability of an individual to give informed consent, for example when working with vulnerable people and children.

Consider whether individuals and/or groups are adequately informed about the potential use and distribution of photographs via the contest, and what impact that could have on them. Information about consent should be indicated in the caption.

- Consider whether measures need to be taken to protect identity especially when photographing vulnerable individuals and/or groups and children–either when photographing or in the caption.

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

- Whether necessary measures have been taken to protect identity especially when photographing vulnerable individuals and/or groups and children.

- Whether the images and stories under consideration repeat well-known examples or are distinctive.

The foundation recognizes these are often matters of judgment, but they indicate some of the issues World Press Photo deals with as it presents the visual stories that matter to the world.

Judging process and representation

Whilst the jury is independent of World Press Photo, the organization provides some criteria to guide and support the jury in the judging process. Without restricting the jury in their deliberations, we ask the jury to consider the following criteria during judging:

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

The core motivation behind the regional contest model is to give a platform to more diverse accounts of our world. In order to adequately represent and contextualize stories, World Press Photo presents the jury with relevant information about the photographer in order to facilitate a more comprehensive approach to understanding and judging entries. In doing so, the judging process emphasizes the importance of context and that means acknowledging accountability, transparency and positionality in image-making.

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

- **Round 1**: No photographer information given.
- **Round 2 onwards**: Information about photographer nationality, where they are based, gender, the title of the work, and a short project description given. The short caption will state the who, what, when, where and why in a single or story.
- **Round 3 onwards**: An edit of the long caption given.
- **Round 4 onwards**: Relevant additional information relating to how and why the story was made, such as the motivation to work on the project, the type of project (assignment/personal project), and funding of the project given.

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

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

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

Local is considered as a photographer who is from the country (and/or community) in which the story is being covered. This can either mean that they have a nationality, or have been living and working in the country for at least ten years.

Number of entrants and submitted photos 2012-2024

*The 2024 Photo Contest saw 3,851 photographers from 130 countries enter 61,062 images.*

YEAR	ENTRANTS	COUNTRIES	SUBMITTED PHOTOS
2012	5,247	124	101,254
2013	5,666	124	103,481
2014	5,754	132	98,671
2015	5,692	131	97,912
2016	5,775	128	82,951
2017	5,034	126	80,408
2018	4,548	125	73,044
2019	4,738	128	78,801
2020	4,282	125	73,996
2021	4,315	130	74,470
2022	4,066	130	64,823
2023	3,752	127	60,448
2024	3,851	130	61,062

TOTAL NUMBER OF ENTRANTS PER YEAR

TOTAL NUMBER OF SUBMITTED PHOTOS PER YEAR
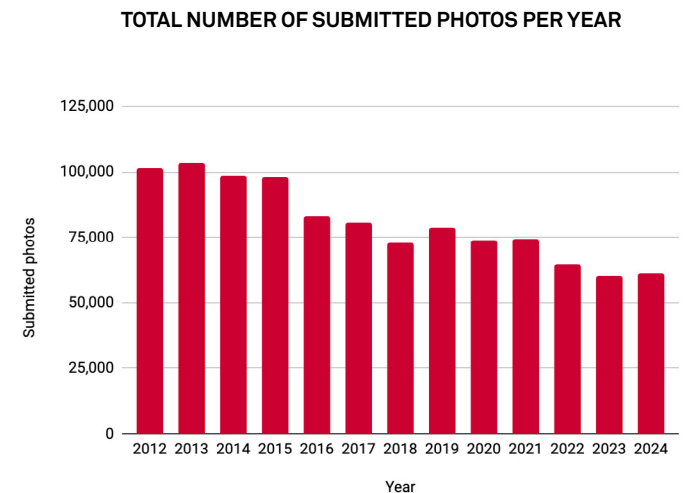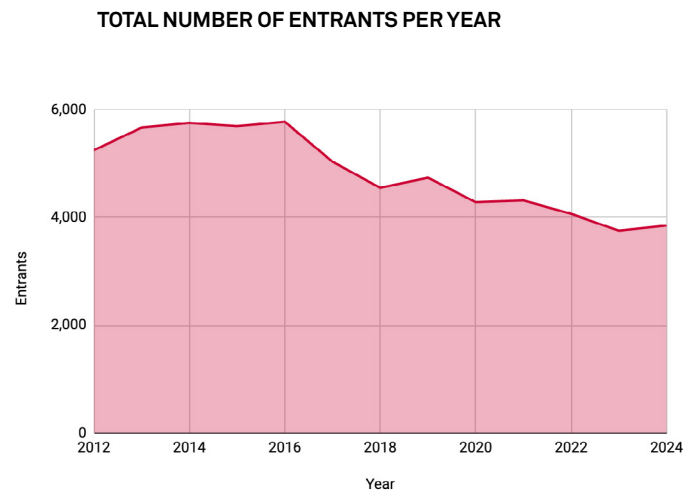
While we have observed a general downward trend since 2012, in 2024 we saw an increase in entrants, photos submitted, and photographer nationalities in comparison to the previous year.

Locality of entrants per region 2020-2024

ENTRANTS BY CONTEST REGION
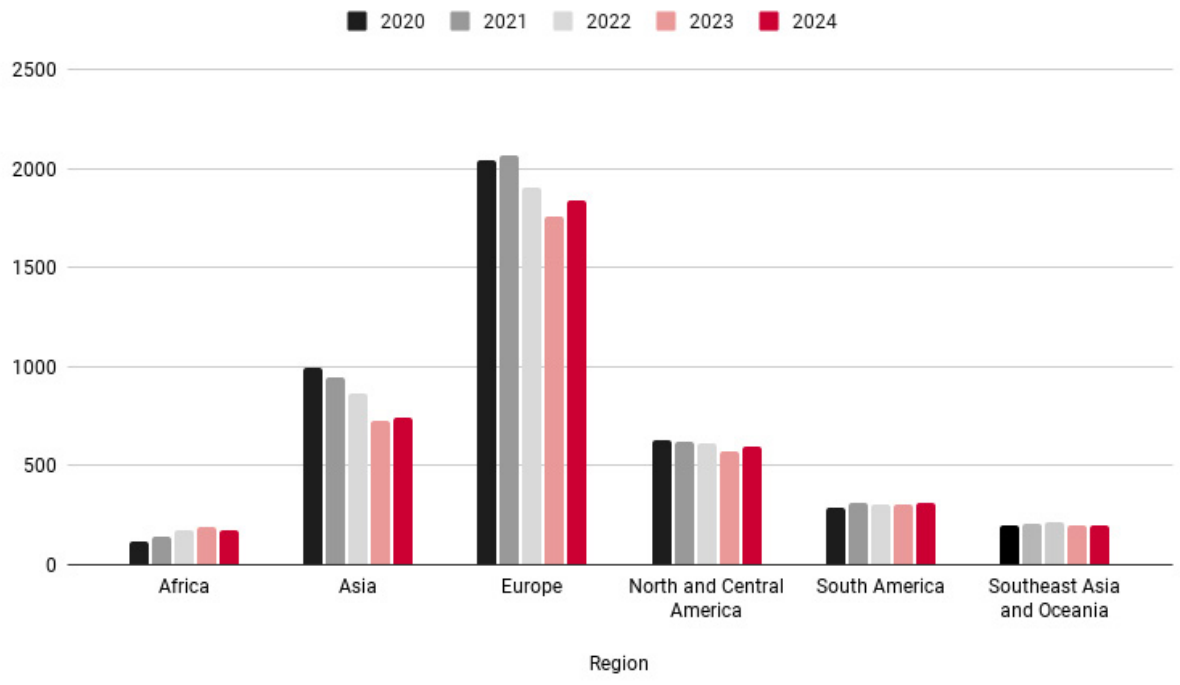
The majority of entrants come from Europe, comprising 46.75% of the total number of entrants in 2024. Following that, 21.22% come from Asia, 15.08% from North and Central America, 7.5% from South America, 5.29% from Southeast Asia and Oceania and 4.16% from Africa.

In 2022 we launched the first contest based on our regional model, and since then it has been encouraging to see the increase in the number of entrants from Africa, South America and Southeast Asia and Oceania. As our audience familiarize themselves with this contest model and we expand our outreach efforts, we do expect to see even more increases in these regions. However, we realize that the total number of entries has followed a downward trend since 2016 therefore increasing our total entries will also be a focus for us.

Nationality of winners 2022-2024

COUNTRY	2022	2023	2024
Anonymous	1	0	0
Argentina	1	2	1
Armenia	0	1	0
Australia	1	1	2
Azerbaijan	0	0	1
Bangladesh	1	0	0
Belgium	0	1	0
Brazil	1	0	3
Canada	2	0	1
China	0	1	1
Colombia	1	0.5	0
Denmark	0	1	0
DRC	0	0	1
Ecuador	1	1	0
Egypt	1	1	0
Ethiopia	1	0	0
France	1	1	1.5
Germany	0,5	1	2.5
Greece	1	1	0
India	2	0	1
Indonesia	1	0	1
Iran	0	2.5	1
Italy	1	2	0

COUNTRY	2022	2023	2024
Japan	1	0	1
Madagascar	1	0	0
Mexico	1	1.5	0
Morocco	0	1	0
Myanmar	1	1	1
Nigeria	1	0	0
Netherlands	1	0	0
Norway	1	0	0
Palestine	1	0	2
Peru	0	0.5	1
Philippines	0	2	1
Russia	1.5	0	0
South Africa	0	1	1
Spain	0	1.5	1
Sudan	1	0	0
Thailand	1	0	0
Tunisia	0	0	1
Turkey	0	0	1
Ukraine	0	1	1
United Kingdom	0	0	1
United States	1	3	1
Venezuela	0	0.5	1

*This list includes Honorable and Special Mentions.*
Dual nationality equates to 0.5

Local, regional and international photographers 2024

PERCENTAGE OF LOCAL / REGIONAL / INTERNATIONAL ENTRANTS PER REGION

	Africa	Asia	Europe	North and Central America	South America	Southeast Asia and Oceania
LOCAL	25.18%	72.99%	62.02%	82.87%	69.19%	67.01%
REGIONAL	7.23%	4.47%	27.08%	3.62%	5.13%	6.13%
INTERNATIONAL	67.59%	22.54%	10.90%	13.51%	25.67%	26.86%

PERCENTAGE OF INTERNATIONAL ENTRIES PER REGION
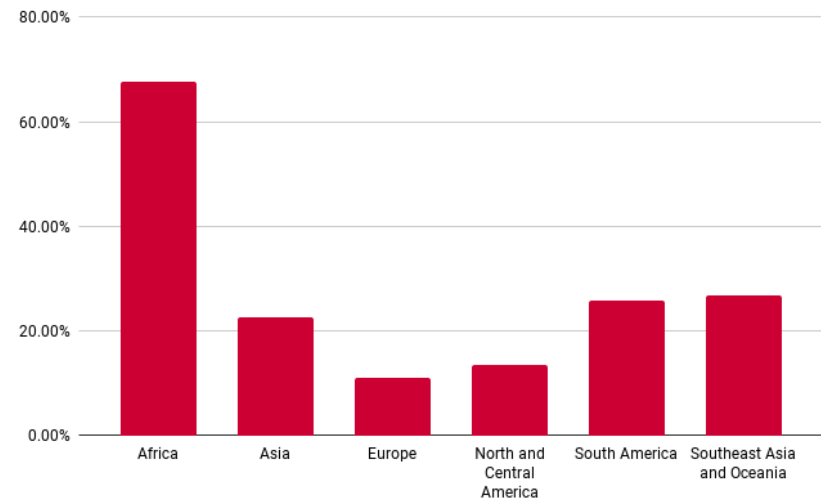
DEFINITIONS

Local: A photographer who is from the country (and/or community) in which the story is being covered is considered local. This can either mean that they have nationality of that country, or have been living and working in the country for at least 10 years.

Regional: We consider a photographer regional if they are from a country (and/or community) that is within the same region as where their photographs were taken.

International: We consider a photographer international if they are not local to or from the greater region where their photographs have been taken.

From this data, we see that the number of local photographers is highest in the region of North and Central America with 87.87%. All regions, except Africa, have a higher number of local photographers entering the contest and a smaller number of international photographers. This is the opposite for Africa where we see the lowest amount of local photographers at 25.18%, and the highest amount of international photographers at 67.59%. It is clear that more work needs to be done to ensure local photographers enter the contest and that perspectives from the African continent are better represented in the contest.

Countries with highest number of entrants 2019-2024

COUNTRIES WITH MORE THAN 100 ENTRANTS	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
United States	540	449	446	417	384	383
China	589	521	411	357	282	282
Italy	332	324	355	270	275	275
France	230	205	189	173	197	206
Germany	200	193	181	176	154	171
Spain	213	179	190	182	158	163
United Kingdom	219	185	182	150	151	148
India	137	121	158	147	128	122
Brazil	112	108	108	121	95	122
Russia	156	147	141	158	126	113
Mexico	n/a	n/a	n/a	84	68	100
Poland	122	112	128	103	76	97
Netherlands	105	102	71	93	66	72
Iran	100	73	123	94	70	77

COUNTRIES WITH MORE THAN 100 ENTRANTS 2024
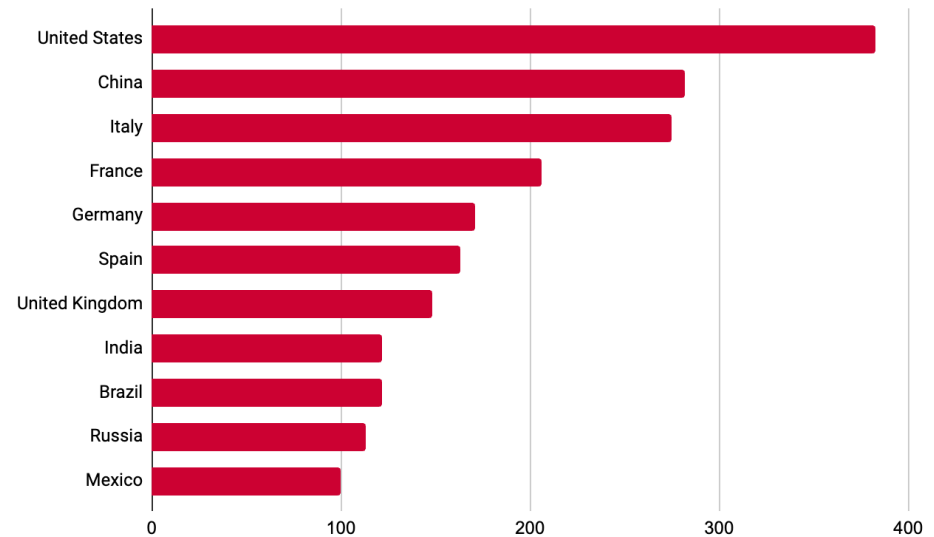
Encouraging a more diverse and inclusive representation of the world is a major goal for World Press Photo and we campaign all year round to attract new photographers to enter the contest.

As part of our 2024 Contest outreach campaign, we worked with our regional partners, The Market Photo Workshop in South Africa and Drik Picture Library in Bangladesh to better connect to local audiences. Our approach included social media posts, direct person-to-person outreach, online events, and newsletters.
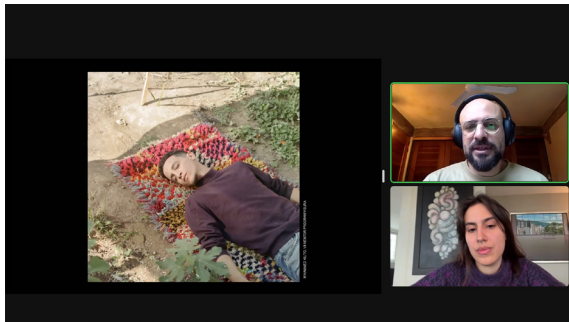
Together with World Press Photo Contest winners, former jury members and industry experts, we hosted a series of Expert Talks in Africa, Asia and South America. The Expert Talks were hosted by various panels in English, French and Spanish with the aim of providing an overview of the entry process and tips on how to submit quality work.

We also ran an organic and paid outreach campaign on our own social channels. This included posts to our general audience but also included social posts tailored to encourage entries from our focus regions: Africa,
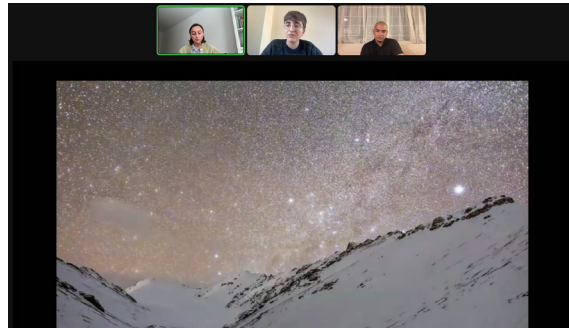
Southeast Asia and Oceania and South America. We sent out newsletters and advertised through Google ads. Additionally, we reached out to our network of former winners, former jury members and collaborators to spread the word.

Important strides have been made to encourage a diversity of entrants and the results of our regional strategy is proving positive. However, the data still underlines that more work is to be done.

2024 Contest Outreach

Expert Talk: Africa

Expert Talk: Asia

Expert Talk: South America

Gender of contest entrants 2022-2024

GENDER OF ENTRANTS

In total, 76.88% of the 2024 Contest entrants identify as male, 22.05% identify as female, and 1.06% selected 'Other' which refers to an open-ended option provided in our contest platform, Picter, which allows entrants to self-identify. Most common are the identities non-binary, queer and gender fluid. While still in the vast majority, we have seen a decrease in photographers identifying as male since the launch of the regional contest model in 2022. In the same period we have seen increases in the number of photographers who identify as female, non-binary, queer and gender fluid. In previous years we included the option 'Prefer not to say', but have removed it in 2024 as tracking gender identity of entrants furthers our goal of increasing diversity in the contest.

One hindrance to clarity on this topic is the fact that we do not know what proportion of the professional photojournalism industry is female-identifying, so we cannot verify whether the proportion of female-identifying entrants is reflective of the industry.

Contest entries by category 2022-2024

CONTEST ENTRIES BY CATEGORY			
	2022	**2023**	**2024**
Singles	16,632	14,755	12,931
Stories	3,449	2,906	3,002
Long-Term Projects	486	433	487
Open Format	490	318	329
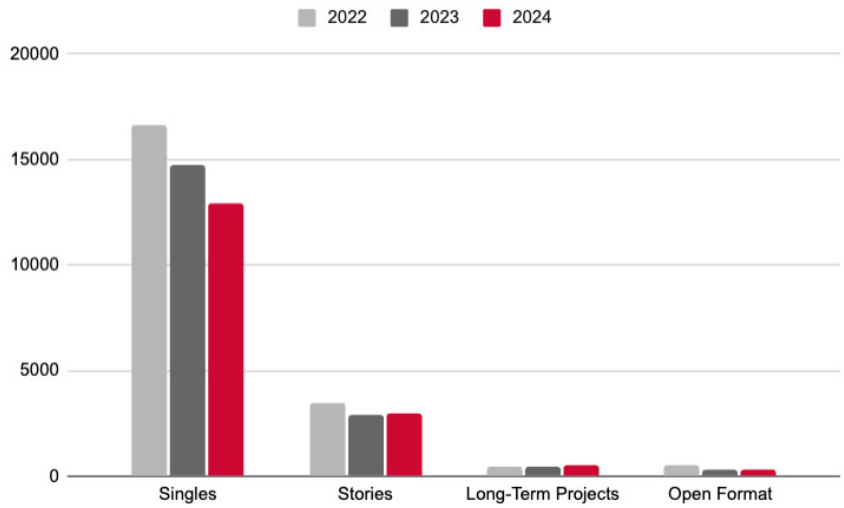
The Singles category is by far the most popular category. These findings reveal more work to be done to increase entries overall, but especially to encourage entries in our Long-Term Projects and Open Format categories.

Verification process

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

Photography gives us a creative interpretation of the world. However, when we want pictures to record and inform us of the varied events, issues, people, and viewpoints in our world, so they can be visual documents, there are limits to how pictures can be made so that the audience can trust them. This is why we take a strict stance on manipulation.

We are the only photo contest that has this extensive a verification process, and we are the only photo contest that can say the winners have successfully passed an extensive verification process.

A) ENTRY CHECKS

Single, Stories and Long-Term Project entries
Our team conducts several checks to ensure entries are in line with the entry rules and category requirements, including: as only single frame photographs can be entered to these categories, we check to see if there are multiple exposures, polyptychs, stitched images or photographs with added texts or added borders; we also check whether

creation and publication dates are according to the rules; and to spot any other problems that might have occurred when uploading to our entry platform.

Open Format entries
Entries in Open Format must meet the entry rules and category requirements. During an entry check our team ensures that the entries meet all the rules and requirements such as (but not limited to): The main visual content of the project must be lens-based still photography; entries in this category must have been produced or first published in 2023; all projects that include text elements must have English-language text available. In the case of video, entries must have English-language audio or include English subtitles.

B) MANIPULATION REVIEW FOR SINGLES, STORIES AND LONG-TERM PROJECTS

Entry rule 17 states photographs "must not be altered by adding, rearranging, reversing, distorting or removing people and/or objects from within the frame." For full details please

see the entry rules on manipulation on the what counts as manipulation page which describes and shows what alterations to the content of a photograph are not acceptable.

There are two exceptions to entry rule 17: (i) cropping that removes extraneous details is permitted; (ii) sensor dust or scratches on scans of negatives can be removed.

The process for ensuring compliance with this rule takes place during the judging process. Entrants whose photographs remain in the contest and were eligible to progress were contacted between 25 January and 25 February 2024 and required to provide the file as recorded by the camera. These files could be:

- RAW file(s) (only one frame per contest image is required);

  OR

- Full format JPEG file(s). These must be as delivered by the camera, and provided in a series showing at least seven frames (three frames before the contest entry, the frame of the actual contest entry, and three frames after the contest entry);

OR

- For smartphones, the unedited photograph emailed directly from the phone to contest@worldpressphoto.org and provided in a series showing at least seven frames (three frames before the contest entry, the frame of the actual contest image, and three frames after the contest image);

OR

- Unprocessed unedited positive scans of film negative(s), plus a contact sheet of a series showing at least seven frames (three frames before the contest entry, the frame of the actual contest entry, and three frames after the contest entry).

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

C) FACT-CHECKING

Once the winners are chosen, an external research team will check the context in which each image or story was produced, distributed and/or published. This could include (but is not limited to): if the individuals mentioned in the caption are in the photo; a news event

is confirmed to have taken place; animals in photos are correctly identified; information about the location and date of a photo is correct; etc.

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

D) STORY TEXT

Once the jury has selected the winners, the external research team gathers background information on each photograph and story. While we rely on the photographers for the basic captions, which are edited for accuracy and clarity, we often need additional information. The research process is vital to providing accurate, contextual captions in the yearbook, website and exhibitions. The foundation is responsible for the content of this text. If required information is missing or incorrect, photographers will be contacted and asked to provide the correct information. Winning photographers are asked to fact check the captions and story descriptions before they are published.

REPORT ON THE VERIFICATION PROCESS

- In 2024 we requested original files for a total 380 entries that advanced from the regional to the global jury. These entries were in the Singles, Stories and Long-Term Project categories. (*Entries in the Open Format category are not checked for manipulation.)
- Of these entries, 141 were reviewed by our forensic team.

The review led to 9 entries being excluded by World Press Photo for cloning and 29 entries excluded by the global jury due to instances of significant toning in one or more photographs.

Denoise Tool
Of these 29 entries, 2 were removed due to significant use of the AI powered Denoise tool. While limited use of Denoise is allowed within the 2024 Contest rules – applying the tool in its max capacity adds new information to the image, which is against contest rules.

Generative AI
During judging, 3 Open Format entries were flagged as possibly employing generative AI. These entries were additionally reviewed by our forensic team, who concluded there were no instances of generative AI used.

WORLD PRESS PHOTO

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