



HUMAN RIGHTS RECOGNITION AWARDS

2026

THEME

*Human Rights in Times of Crisis:
Recognizing Courage and Resilience*



Human Rights Recognition Awards (HRRA) 2026 Concept Note

Theme:

“Human Rights in Times of Crisis: Recognizing Courage and Resilience”

1. Introduction

The Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue's Human Rights Recognition Awards (HRRA) 2026 will focus on the protection of human rights in contexts of armed conflict, occupation and insecurity. Protecting and defending the human rights,¹ dignity and safety of affected people is more urgent than ever as conflicts continue to ravage communities in several regions.

Civilians bear the brunt of wars in Gaza, Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen, Ukraine, Syria and Myanmar. Homes are destroyed, families are displaced, and the fundamental rights to life, safety, health and education are systematically denied.

The HRRA 2026 will celebrate individuals and institutions that demonstrate exceptional courage and resilience in protecting human rights in times of crisis. The Geneva Centre's recognition of those who protect and defend human rights, document violations, support victims and strengthen conflict-affected communities reflects its commitment to human rights, justice and accountability.

2. Objective

The HRRA 2026 seeks to honour exceptional efforts to uphold human dignity and promote human rights under the most challenging conditions. By recognizing institutions and individuals, the Geneva Centre highlights the importance of practical action, innovative ideas and tangible results in helping populations remain safe, free and have their rights respected, even during crises.

3. Award Categories

The HRRA 2026 will feature four award categories. Three categories will carry a prize of CHF 1,000 each, while the Humanitarian Response Award will be honorary and non-monetary. The virtual ceremony will recognize individuals, organizations, communities and networks working to protect human rights and human dignity in situations of armed conflict, occupation and displacement.

¹ For the purpose of the HRRA 2026, 'protection' refers to actions that safeguard the human rights, dignity and safety of individuals and communities affected by armed conflict, occupation or insecurity, including through advocacy, legal assistance, community-based initiatives, monitoring, prevention and direct support to persons at risk.



Title: **Award for the Protection of Human Rights in Armed Conflict**

- **Eligibility:** Individuals, NGOs, organizations or networks whose work protects and defends the human rights, dignity and safety of individuals and communities affected by armed conflict, occupation or insecurity.
- **Focus:** Advocacy, legal assistance, community-based initiatives, monitoring, prevention and direct support to persons at risk.
- **Prize:** CHF 1,000

Title: **Award for Documentation, Justice and Accountability**

- **Eligibility:** Institutions or individuals documenting human rights violations, promoting accountability mechanisms or supporting transitional justice processes.
- **Focus:** Evidence collection, legal advocacy, victim representation, truth-seeking or efforts to combat impunity.
- **Prize:** CHF 1,000

Title: **Award for Human Dignity and Resilience in Conflict-Affected Communities**

- **Eligibility:** Individuals or groups promoting the resilience and dignity of communities during armed conflict, occupation or displacement.
- **Focus:** Psychosocial support, educational activities, livelihood recovery, community reconciliation, cultural identity or social cohesion.
- **Prize:** CHF 1,000

Title: **Humanitarian Response Award (Honorary Category)**

- **Eligibility:** An individual, entity or coordinated national or humanitarian effort demonstrating outstanding leadership and effectiveness in delivering large-scale emergency relief during a humanitarian crisis.
- **Focus:** Exemplary humanitarian leadership, coordination and implementation of sustained, life-saving action during complex and protracted crises. This category recognises efforts that provide comprehensive assistance, including health care, food security, water and sanitation, shelter, and logistical coordination, in collaboration with local and international actors.
- **Prize:** Honorary (non-monetary)

4. Key Criteria

For Institutions:

- Evidence of results demonstrated through reports or policy changes.
- Innovative approaches to addressing human rights issues during crises.
- Resilience and persistence in challenging circumstances.

For Individuals:

- Individual courage in defending human rights during emergencies.
- Evidence that the individual's work has made a tangible difference to affected people.
- Actions and ideas that inspire others to uphold human rights.



5. Nomination Process

- Nominations will be accepted from any country.
- Nominations can be made by any individual or organization, including self-nominations.
- Submissions should include a statement of achievements, supporting evidence of no more than three pages, and at least two references.

6. Selection Process

All eligible nominations will undergo an internal review by the Geneva Centre team, in consultation with experts in international humanitarian law, human rights and conflict studies. The review will prioritize effective, courageous and impactful work that advances human rights in crisis situations.

Key Evaluation Criteria:

- **Clarity of Submission:** Is the nomination clear, well documented and supported by evidence?
- **Real Impact:** Has the nominee's work had a tangible effect on the protection of rights or support for communities?
- **Courage and Resilience:** Does the nominee demonstrate exceptional commitment in difficult circumstances?
- **Relevance:** Is the work relevant to the theme and award category?

7. Timeline

- **September 2026:** Call for nominations opens.
- **October 2026:** Shortlisting of finalists.
- **November 2026:** Internal review and final selection of award recipients.
- **10 December 2026:** Awards presented during the Geneva Centre's virtual ceremony marking Human Rights Day.

8. Awards Benefits

Award recipients will receive the following benefits:

- A CHF 1,000 cash award to support the continuation of their work, except for the recipient of the honorary category.
- Greater visibility through the Geneva Centre's platforms, networks and media outreach.
- An opportunity to share their work and connect with other human rights advocates and organizations.

9. Conclusion

The HRRA 2026 will honour those who stand up for human rights when it matters most. By highlighting courage and resilience in the face of danger, the Geneva Centre seeks to reinforce a culture of accountability, justice, respect for human dignity and principled action in times of crisis. These awards reaffirm that human rights form the basis of peace, security and human development.