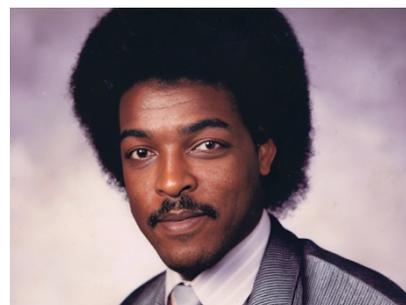




## WASHINGTON – THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB DEMANDS THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF JOURNALIST DAWIT ISAAK

*The National Press Club in Washington has issued a statement demanding the immediate release of journalist Mr. Dawit Isaak, a prisoner of conscience and the world's longest arbitrarily detained journalist. Mr. Dawit Isaak, the 2024 Edelstam Prize Laureate, has been unlawfully imprisoned since 2001 without trial. He has not been charged with a crime, nor has he been allowed to speak with his lawyer.*



*Photo: Dawit Isaak, private*

The National Press Club is the world's leading professional organization for journalists, and the Club and its Center for Press Freedom are leading voices for press freedom matters in the U.S. and worldwide. The National Press Club stands with press freedom advocates around the world in demanding justice for Mr. Dawit Isaak. In a distinct statement, the President of the National Press Club, Mr. Mike Balsamo, says:

“The National Press Club demands the immediate release of journalist Dawit Isaak, who has been unjustly imprisoned for 23 years — without charges, without a trial, and without regard for basic human rights. Reports have exposed the appalling conditions of his detention, yet Eritrea continues to defy international law and ignore global calls for justice. We believe Isaak is the longest-detained journalist in the world — a grim distinction that underscores the Eritrean government's contempt for press freedom. Journalism is not a crime. Silencing truth-tellers through indefinite detention is a violation of fundamental human rights, and the time for Isaak's freedom is long overdue.”

**See the National Press Club's Press Release with Statement here:**

<https://www.press.org/newsroom/eritrea-must-free-journalist-dawit-isaak-detained-23-years>

### **Edelstam Prize Laureate 2024**

Mr. Dawit Isaak was awarded the Edelstam Prize in November 2024 for his outstanding contributions and exceptional courage in standing up for freedom of expression, one's beliefs, and in the defence of Human Rights. He is a Swedish-Eritrean journalist and writer who has been unjustly imprisoned in Eritrea for over two decades and is the world's longest arbitrarily detained journalist.

“The National Press Club's firmness in their statement reinforces the fact that a prolonged imprisonment of a journalist in these circumstances is not only an act of grave injustice but also a direct threat to the freedom of expression and democracy. Every voice is essential in order to put further pressure on the Eritrean regime, as it systematically curtails a wide range of fundamental human rights, including freedom of expression, association, assembly and information, which is handled with censorship, arbitrary arrests, detentions without trial and systematic and pervasive torture. Mass roundups and arbitrary arrests as well as the detention of journalists and human right defenders without trail are unexceptional, says Caroline Edelstam, President of the Edelstam Foundation.

## **Global Attention and High-Level Initiatives**

The Edelstam Prize has brought renewed media attention and high-level initiatives on Mr. Dawit Isaak's struggle, and has galvanized calls for his release, with governments, human rights organizations, institutions, scholars, human right defenders, and individuals around the world voicing their support.

**Collected International Publicity:** <https://www.edelstam.org/international-publicity/>

**Collected High-Level Initiatives:** <https://www.edelstam.org/high-level-inititatives/>

“It is wonderful to see the solidarity of the international community and the widespread attention and high-level initiatives for Mr. Dawit Isaak's case, it gives me hope in humanity. It is important to find ways to enforce national and international law and to promote accountability for serious abuses of human rights. Where violations have occurred, states must be held accountable. The international community has a responsibility for establishing justice, ensuring the protection of victims, and upholding the principle that nobody is above the law. Democratic countries should put pressure on the perpetrator, in this case Eritrea, which is essential and could have a noticeable effect. Enforced disappearances and persecution of journalists are grave human rights violations,” says Caroline Edelstam, President of the Edelstam Foundation.

Edelstam Foundation respectfully asks the authorities of the State of Eritrea to free Dawit Isaak together with other still imprisoned journalists and members of the G-15, and in any case, to immediately reveal Dawit Isaak's whereabouts, and to respect without delay his right to be visited and assisted by a lawyer and by Swedish Consular authorities.

## **Press Contacts**

For press materials in several languages and press photos please go to our international Press Room <https://www.edelstam.org/international-press-room/> or contact us through [press@edelstamprize.org](mailto:press@edelstamprize.org)

## **The Edelstam Prize**

The Edelstam Prize is a Sweden-based international monetary award, administrated by the Harald Edelstam Foundation. The Edelstam Prize is awarded for outstanding contributions and exceptional courage in standing up for one's beliefs in the Defence of Human Rights.

The Edelstam Prize is named after, and awarded in memory of, the Swedish diplomat and Ambassador, Harald Edelstam (1913-1989). Harald Edelstam distinguished himself as a diplomat by his professional competence, his bravery, and his civic courage in the fight for Human Rights. His memorable acts contributed to saving more than a thousand lives.

The winner of the Edelstam Prize can be a private person or a person who serves in Government, international or national organizations. The winner shall be an individual who has acted in Ambassador Harald Edelstam's spirit in a country/countries where Human Rights, according to international law, have been violated. The laureate must have shown outstanding capabilities in analysing and handling complex situations and in finding ways, even unconventional and creative ones, to defend Human Rights. The candidate has, presumably in a complex situation, been able to take a decisive role in helping threatened people or directly saving human lives. Civic courage is a central parameter in the selection of the successful candidate.

## **Members of the Jury**

The international jury is chaired by **Ms. Caroline Edelstam**, Harald Edelstam's granddaughter and co-founder of the Edelstam Foundation. Other members are the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate 2003 **Judge Shirin Ebadi**, who represents Asia. Africa is represented by **Dr. Fatou Bensouda**, former Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC). **Ambassador Eileen Donahoe**, Executive Director of Global Digital Policy Incubator at Stanford University's Center for Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law and the former US Ambassador to UN Human Rights Council represents North America. **Professor Philip Alston**, former UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, represents Oceania. Latin America is represented by **Magistrate Patricia Linares Prieto**, former President of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP). Europe is represented by former **Judge Baltasar Garzón**, who served on Spain's central criminal court, who is known for having indicted the Chilean dictator, General Augusto Pinochet for the deaths and torture of thousands of victims from Chile and other countries.

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