

Ukraine war dominates Nobel year again

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Most publicly known Nobel Peace nominees are involved in the Ukraine conflict.

From NATO's secretary general to the Ukrainian president, the war in Ukraine dominates the publicly known names submitted by Tuesday's deadline for the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize.

The list of nominees submitted to the committee is kept secret for at least 50 years, in line with Nobel statutes.

But those eligible to nominate people—including former laureates, lawmakers and cabinet ministers from any country in the world, and some university professors—are free to reveal the name of the person or organisation they have proposed.

Most of the names that have been publicly disclosed so far are involved in the nearly year-long conflict that has been raging in Ukraine, or opponents of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Experts warn that the Norwegian Nobel Committee may be tempted to look in another direction, however, when it announces this year's [prize](#) in October.

An MP from Norway's Green Party, Lan Marie Berg, said on Tuesday she had nominated Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg—believed to have been on the list for several years running—and her Ugandan counterpart Vanessa Nakate.

Others known to have been nominated include Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, proposed by the speaker of Pakistan's upper house of parliament, for his "untiring" efforts to resolve the Ukrainian crisis.



The conflict has been raging in Ukraine for nearly a year.

Lawmaker Christian Tybring-Gjedde, from Norway's populist party, hinted on Facebook shortly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24 that he would nominate Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

He has also proposed fellow Norwegian Jens Stoltenberg, whom he says "deserves the prize for his exemplary work as NATO secretary general at a difficult time for the alliance: a brutal and unprovoked offensive against a peaceful neighbouring country".

Others known to have been nominated are jailed Putin opponents—anti-corruption activist Alexei Navalny, who was the victim of a poisoning

attack, and journalist and political activist Vladimir Kara-Murza, who says he has survived two poisonings.

"We now know that the basis for this war is a Russian regime founded on corruption and oppression," said Ingjerd Schou, the Norwegian lawmaker who nominated Kara-Murza.

Kara-Murza "is taking part in the most important political fight to put an end to the war in Ukraine and guarantee Europe's future peace", she told Norwegian agency NTB.

'Eurocentric' fears

The two previous Nobel Peace Prizes have been widely interpreted as direct criticism of Putin.



Turkey's President Erdogan was proposed by the speaker of Pakistan's upper house of parliament.

Last year, the prize was shared by Russian human rights group Memorial—which Moscow ordered dissolved—Ukraine's Center for Civil Liberties (CCL) and jailed Belarusian rights advocate Ales Bialiatski.

The trio represents the three nations at the centre of the war in Ukraine, which all of them have criticised.

In 2021, another thorn in the Kremlin's side, Dmitry Muratov, chief editor of leading independent newspaper Novaya Gazeta, shared the prize with the Philippines' Maria Ressa for their fight for freedom of expression in their respective countries.

The head of the Peace Research Institute of Oslo, Henrik Urdal, said it was unlikely however that the Nobel committee would fire another salvo at Putin in 2023, due to the risk of appearing "Eurocentric".

"I doubt they'd award a third straight prize pointing in Russia's direction", he told AFP.

"It was difficult for the committee to do otherwise last year because the Ukraine conflict was so important and dominant," he said.

"But it's also necessary to shine the spotlight on other international problems in other parts of the world," Urdal added.

Each year, several hundred nominees are proposed for the Nobel Peace Prize. In 2022, there were 343 nominees.

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