



# Civil Courage News

Journal of the Civil Courage Prize

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For Steadfast Resistance to Evil at Great Personal Risk

## A Makeover of The Civil Courage Prize Website Made its Debut in January 2021

There were many unique challenges in 2020 and because of COVID-19, the Civil Courage Prize ceremony was not held last October. The Train Foundation used its time and resources to update the Civil Courage Prize website ([www.civilcourageprize.org](http://www.civilcourageprize.org)) and create a more complete and informative site.

Besides a fresh new look, features are easier to access. All relevant information about winners, including bios, videos, press releases, acceptance speeches and remarks by ceremony speakers, can be accessed by clicking a link on the laureate's photo. In addition, all newsletters are published on the website.

We have streamlined and simplified the nomination process and made it available to anyone who wants to participate. This will give a wider audience a voice in proposing a nominee and, we hope, lead to a wider group of candidates.

In the future, we plan to phase out the paper copy of the newsletter in favor of a digital version only. If you would like a copy of the newsletter emailed to you and are not on our email list, we encourage you to use the link on the website to sign up. If you already receive an emailed copy, there is no need to sign up again. There is also a link on the site to contact us if you would like to update your information.

We are very excited to share the new website with you and urge you to explore it and make suggestions for its improvement. Please ask your friends who might be interested to take a look at our site and nominate a candidate for the Prize.

## Calabrian Prosecutor Nicola Gratteri, 2014 Civil Courage Laureate, Brings 'Ndrangheta Mafia Members to Trial

For the past 30 years, Italian prosecutor Nicola Gratteri, the winner of the 2014 Civil Courage Prize, has been committed to dismantling the 'Ndrangheta, Italy's richest and most powerful organized crime syndicate. He has vowed to take down "this asphyxiating 'Ndrangheta, which truly takes the breath and the heartbeat from the people."

In December 2019, Gratteri coordinated a pre-dawn raid where Italian police arrested 450 'Ndrangheta members and their associates in Italy, Bulgaria, Germany and Switzerland. It included several high-ranking Calabrian officials, the president of the Calabrian mayors' association, a former member of the Italian Parliament, a police chief, lawyers, businesspeople, accountants, civil servants, and police officers.

In mid January 2021, over 325 of those indicted came to trial, with another 91 scheduled for a "fast track trial" at the end of the month, and a third trial involving five murders beginning in February.

The total number to face formal charges is estimated by the *Atlantic Monthly* to be as many as 470. The charges include drug trafficking, murder, attempted murder, extortion, money laundering, loan sharking, disclosure of official secrets and abuse of office. According to the *BBC News* and *CBS News*, the prosecution hopes to call 900 witnesses and the trial could take up to three years. It will be held at a modified call center; what the *New York Times* calls a "bunker," in southern Calabria, the heart of 'Ndrangheta territory. There will be 600 lawyers and up to 1,000 attendees. Some of the accused will be tried remotely due to COVID-19 restrictions and those in jail on other charges will view the trial on monitors.

In the past, Italian law enforcement has never managed to completely wipe the out the Mafia. However, Gratteri believes his case is historic, along the lines of the Palermo-based 1986 "Maxiprocesso" trial, which convicted hundreds of the heads of major Sicilian Cosa Nostra families.

Entrenched in southern Italy, the Mafia traces its 150-year history back to Sicily, where blood relatives formed networks to shake down businesses for protection money. They cultivated relationships with government officials to overlook their ruthless and violent criminal activities.

The 'Ndrangheta's roots are in Calabria, southern Italy's poorest region. Always secretive, for years it paled in comparison to better-known Mafia groups like Sicily's Cosa Nostra and the Camorra in Naples, which were romanticized in movies and TV. Today, the 'Ndrangheta is Italy's top crime syndicate. While still relying on family relationships, it has become a modern, diverse and highly sophisticated organization. According to *The Financial Times*, its leaders, often graduates of top universities, are



Calabrian Prosecutor Nicola Gratteri

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## Letter From The Chairman

Librado Romero/The New York Times



Richard Gilder

Richard Gilder, a prodigious philanthropist and a patron of the Civil Courage Prize, died recently at the age of 87. He leaves behind several children and his wife, the enchanting Lois Chiles.

Early on, he came to an award ceremony and immediately got the point: that if you reward one man of conscience you encourage others to follow in his steps. Later he approached me, saying, "I invest in people, and I want to invest in you. Tell me how you want to build up this operation and I'll back you. No limit."

I was both surprised and flattered by the offer and thought about it for some time. Finally, I replied to Gilder that the present concept of the prize was elegant and simple and quite easy to administrate, while if it was expanded in the obvious way, such as following up and supporting the work of the laureates it would become complicated enough to require a large staff, which we might not be able to run successfully. So, Gilder left his support at the patron level – very welcome!

Here is a description of his other benefactions, taken from the obituary in The New York Times:

"Mr. Gilder, a conservative, pro-growth Republican, formed an unlikely partnership in 1974 with George Soros, the liberal philanthropist, to rehabilitate Central Park, laying the foundation for what became the Central Park Conservancy in 1980.

"Embraced by New York City's parks commis-

sioner at the time, Gordon J. Davis, the conservancy, a public-private partnership, restored Central Park.

"In 1993, Mr. Gilder, who had played in the park as a child and ran there daily as an adult, pledged \$17 million if the conservancy and the city matched his commitment. It was the largest private gift in a public park at the time.

"He began his history restoration project in the late 1980s, teaming up with Lewis E. Lehrman, who had left academia to run Rite-Aid, his family's drug-store chain, and had run for governor in 1982 as the Republican-Conservative candidate, barely losing to Mario M. Cuomo. They amassed a collection that would eventually consist of 70,000 original documents, letters, pamphlets, diaries and other primary sources that illuminate American history.

"Then they deposited them in a specially built \$1 million vault in the basement of the New-York Historical Society in Manhattan to exhibit and share with scholars and educators.

"Mr. Gilder also restored the New-York Historical Society itself as chairman of its executive committee, rescuing it from a precarious financial state and returning it to solvency; renovating its headquarters.

"Mr. Gilder's philanthropy extended across West 77th Street to the American Museum of Natural History, to which he gave \$50 million to establish the Richard Gilder Graduate School. Under its president, Ellen V. Futter, the museum was the first in the Western Hemisphere to begin, through the school, a doctoral degree-granting program. In 2012, he pledged \$60 million more to build the Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education and Innovation."

## The Story of The Civil Courage Prize

Many years ago, John Train became concerned with the situation of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, the great Russian hero and author, whose works helped destroy the prestige of Stalinism. After being exiled, he had moved to rural Vermont, but was living in poverty. Train was able to obtain substantial private support for him, and accompanied him to London, where Prince Philip handed him a check in a Buckingham Palace ceremony.

Train, who delivered the English-language response at the ceremony, realized that there was no word in English for the virtue that Solzhenitsyn so nobly exemplified, but that there should be, perhaps "civil courage," as distinct from valor in war. He resolved to create a prize for this virtue, and asked if Solzhenitsyn would like to receive it, or have it named after him, or be a judge. He chose the last, and acted in that role for the rest of his life. His son has followed him.

The prize, a substantial honorarium and a medal, is "for steadfast resistance to evil at great personal risk." It was first awarded, in London, to Natasa Kandic, sometimes called the Serbian Schindler. Subsequent laureates have come from most parts of the world. One, Anna Politkovskaya, reporting on atrocities in Chechnya, was assassinated in the course of the very work for which she was honored, as were several others who were recognized posthumously, notably Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Giovanni Falcone and Raoul Wallenberg.

Civil courage is essential for a good society. Some few must step forward to challenge iniquity. Our hope is that by introducing the expression "civil courage" into the English language, and by holding up for general admiration heroes of conscience who exemplify it, we can encourage the good side of human nature.

To select the prizewinner, we invite nominations from an international list of distinguished organizations and persons. Our administrative office then checks to see if the nominee truly fills our qualifications. Once the nominations have been researched, they are reviewed by the Trustees and a short list is created, which is then sent on to our Advisors for ranking. Their choices are in turn considered by the Trustees, who make the final decision.

When the laureate has come to New York to receive the medal and the stipend, we introduce him to the press and to other organizations with similar objectives here and in Washington. He will probably make contact with twenty or thirty groups and hundreds of individuals. These encounters will fortify his resolve to continue on his difficult course and will help develop useful allies. It adds prestige to a good person pursuing a difficult goal to be able to invoke such connections. We have found that winning the prize confers a measure of protection to a laureate's life at home.

The hero of conscience is usually solitary: his companions are found in history books. He battles for a cause that even his friends may not understand or believe in, or dare to espouse. The noblest causes may be those that seem hopeless at the time. Civil courage empowers us to face the world alone.

For further information and updates on current and previous prizewinners, please go to:

[www.civildcourageprize.org](http://www.civildcourageprize.org)

Twitter: @TrainFoundation

Facebook: Civil Courage Prize

## RECENT NEWS

The Honorable Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile and a speaker at the 2011 Civil Courage Prize ceremony, now serves as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

At the September 2020 session of the Human Rights Council at the U.N.'s European headquarters in Geneva, Bachelet updated her November 2019 report on human rights violations in Venezuela. The report was created with input from Foro Penal, the organization founded by the 2019 Civil Courage Prize laureate Gonzalo Himiob Santomé.



Michelle Bachelet

Bachelet called on Venezuela to release all political prisoners. "There are still cases of repression of peaceful protesters in the state of emergency that has been in place since March. There are also restrictions on freedom of expression...including...legislation against human rights activists."

Venezuela's human rights situation has deteriorated because of the pandemic. Many of the estimated 4.5 million people, who fled persecution and economic hardship from 2015 on, have had to return because COVID-19 restrictions have made it impossible for them to earn a living in other countries. Bachelet is concerned that some Venezuelan authorities are stigmatizing the returnees and detaining them as well.

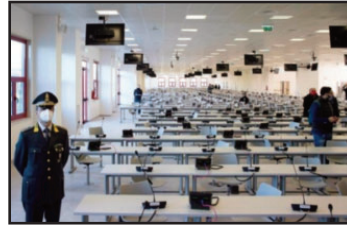
Although Nicolas Maduro's government has recently released 110 political opponents and 40 others who were detained for months, there are many who are still arbitrarily prevented from exercising their civic and democratic rights.

Bachelet emphasized that as the Covid-19 crisis has "deepened worldwide," the work of the U.N. peacekeepers is crucial. "The U.N.'s peace operations is a powerful tool to protect and promote human rights," she told the Human Rights Council. "Their tasks now include taking stock of the effectiveness and enforcement of coronavirus containment measures, identifying the pandemic's impact on vulnerable groups...and assessing the impact on economic, social and cultural rights," she said. "Equally essential is the monitoring of pandemic-related stigmatization, discrimination and hate speech as well as conflict-related violations," she added.

Recently she commented on Twitter, "Let's not forget those who are fighting and speaking up for our rights every day: we stand with human rights defenders everywhere."

## NICOLA GRATTERI CONTINUES HIS FIGHT

*continued from page 1*



*The courtroom "bunker"*

"blurring the lines between Mafia thugs and tie-wearing financiers." Because it has operated in secret, there are only estimates of actual membership, which can range anywhere from 6,000 to 10,000.

A \$60 billion global operation with businesses extending to 31 countries on four continents, the 'Ndrangheta controls more than half the cocaine distribution in Europe, importing it from affiliates in Latin America. Having made billions in cocaine revenues, it now makes "clean money" by investing in and running legitimate businesses in the tourism, hospitality and restaurant sectors, along with pharmacies and car dealerships. It has infiltrated the investment market, the construction industry, and the funeral home business, where profits have increased due to the pandemic's high death rate and more families are forced to use their services. The 'Ndrangheta has skimmed off of public health funds, putting Calabria's healthcare system in jeopardy, and the region is already short of hospitals to meet the minimum requirements of the virus. A local health authority commented that "Ndrangheta and COVID-19 are both pandemics."

In addition, the lockdown has made people desperate and the 'Ndrangheta offers money to struggling businesses and individual families. While nothing has been asked in return, everyone knows there will be payback later on.

According to *The Wall Street Journal*, the unemployment rate in Calabria is 21.6%. With few economic opportunities and a mistrust of authorities, some young people feel they have no other choice but to work for the mafia. Gratteri feels that the 'Ndrangheta "offers hope" to them and to counteract this, he works with Calabria's youth to deter them from joining the mob.

The arrests have brought changes. In the January 2020 Calabrian regional election, political parties felt pressured to prove their candidates did not have criminal ties. Previously, people were afraid to speak up for fear of retribution. Now, mob members have begun to testify and the 'Ndrangheta, no longer based almost entirely on blood ties, is vulnerable. Gratteri is hopeful. "Today we are beginning to speak out in the open sunlight."

Gratteri describes his pursuit as a war. He lives with constant death threats from the mob and his home in Catanzaro, a 'Ndrangheta Calabrian stronghold, is surrounded by armed guards and security cameras. He travels to and from work with a police escort in an armored, bomb-resistant vehicle. Although he says that he feels that he is under house arrest, he acknowledges that, "in my mind I feel very free."

He is philosophical about his life. "It's important to tame fear, to dialogue with death and to tell oneself that even if I die tonight or tomorrow it's not a disaster because I've had a good life." He goes on to say, "I've been a lucky man."

### A REMINDER TO READERS

To receive the newsletter via email, log on to [www.civil-courageprize.org](http://www.civil-courageprize.org), click on the mailing list link and fill out the form. While you are there, check out the website's new features.



## The Train Foundation

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## Past Honorees

2019 Gonzalo Himiob Santomé  
*Defender of persecuted Venezuelans*

2018 Vladimir Kara-Murza  
*Heroic Russian opposition leader*

2017 Pierre Claver Mbonimpa  
*Campaigner for social justice in Burundi*

2016 RBSS  
*(Raqqā is Being Slaughtered Silently)  
Journalists revealing ISIS atrocities from inside Syria*

Thuli Madonsela  
*(Honorable Mention)  
Anti-corruption crusader, South Africa*

2015 Claudia Paz y Paz  
*Prosecutor of human rights abuses, Guatemala*

Yassmín Barrios  
*Presiding judge in Ríos Montt genocide trial, Guatemala*

2014 Nicola Gratteri  
*Relentless prosecutor of the Italian mafia*

2013 Dr. Denis Mukwege  
*Physician and advocate for victims of violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*

2012 Yu Jie  
*Author and advocate for reform in China*

2011 Triveni Acharya  
*Defender of victims of human trafficking in India*

Lydia Cacho Ribeiro  
*Champion of abused women and children in Mexico*

2010 Andrew White  
*Steadfast advocate for peace in the Middle East*

2009 Aminatou Haidar  
*Champion of the non-violent campaign for self-determination in Western Sabaru*

2008 Ali Salem  
*Egyptian author and journalist; voice for peace and reason in the Middle East*

2007 Phillip Buck  
*Imprisoned in China for guiding North Korean refugees in their escape to freedom*

2006 Rafael Marques de Morais  
*Journalist who exposed the slaughter of Angolans and the plundering of national assets*

2005 Min Ko Naing  
*Long-imprisoned campaigner for democracy in Burma*

Anna Politkovskaya  
*Fearless reporter on atrocities in Chechnya, assassinated 2006*

Munir Said Thalib†  
*Exposed disappearances and corruption in Indonesia, assassinated*

2004 Emadeddin Baghi  
*Imprisoned for exposing assassinations of Iranian intellectuals*

Lovemore Madhuku  
*Lawyer persecuted for demanding constitutional reform in Zimbabwe*

Abdul al-Latif al-Mayah†  
*Iraqi political scientist and human rights advocate, assassinated*

2003 Shahnaz Bukhari  
*Battler against the burning and other abuse of Pakistani women*

2002 Vladimiro Roca Antunez  
*Champion of freedom, Cuba*

Gustavo Arcos Bergnes  
*(Honorable Mention)  
Early democracy activist, Cuba*

2001 Paul Kamara  
*Editor and journalist fighting tyranny in Sierra Leone*

2000 Natasa Kandic  
*Persecuted journalist and activist, Belgrade*

Sergei Khodorovich  
*(Honorable Mention)  
Solzhenitsyn collaborator exiled to hard labor in Siberia*

Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer†  
*Anti-Nazi martyr*

Judge Giovanni Falcone†  
*Assassinated while prosecuting the Sicilian mafia*

Rosemary Nelson†  
*Civil rights lawyer, assassinated while defending accused persons in Northern Ireland*

Neelan Tiruchelvam†  
*Lawyer and educator, killed by a suicide bomber while working for solutions to Tamil-Sri Lankan conflict*

Raoul Wallenberg†  
*Saved thousands of Jews from extermination*

† = posthumous

The Civil Courage Prize honors civil courage – steadfast resistance to evil at great personal risk – rather than military valor. The acts so recognized should have taken place deliberately, over time. Nominations for the Prize are solicited primarily from non-profit, non-governmental organizations worldwide. Further information and a nomination form may be obtained from our website: [www.civil-courageprize.org](http://www.civil-courageprize.org).

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

—Edmund Burke



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