

Pope Francis and the WHO among Nobel Peace Prize nominees

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Oslo, February 4 (RHC)-- Pope Francis, British nature broadcaster David Attenborough and the World Health Organization are among the nominees for this year's Nobel Peace Prize after being backed by Norwegian lawmakers who have a track record of picking the winner.

Also among the candidates for the accolade are Greta Thunberg, the Myanmar National Unity Government formed by opponents of last year's coup and Tuvalu's foreign minister Simon Kofe,

according to last-minute announcements.

Thousands of people, from members of parliaments worldwide to former winners, are eligible to propose candidates. Norwegian lawmakers have nominated an eventual Peace laureate every year since 2014 – with the exception of 2019 – including one of the two laureates last year, Maria Ressa.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee, which decides who wins the award, does not comment on nominations, keeping secret for 50 years the names of nominators and unsuccessful nominees. But some nominators, like Norwegian lawmakers, choose to reveal their picks.

Attenborough, 95, is best known for his landmark television series illustrating the natural world, including *Life on Earth* and *The Blue Planet*. He was nominated jointly with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), which assesses the state of biodiversity worldwide for policymakers.

They were nominated for “their efforts to inform about, and protect, Earth’s natural diversity, a prerequisite for sustainable and peaceful societies,” said nominator Une Bastholm, leader of the Norwegian Green Party.

Another Green Party representative nominated Sweden’s Greta Thunberg, whose rise from teen activist to global climate leader has made her a frequent Nobel nominee in recent years, along with the Fridays For Future movement she started.

Pope Francis was nominated for his efforts to help solve the climate crisis as well as his work towards peace and reconciliation, by Dag Inge Ulstein, a former minister of international development.

Tuvalu’s Foreign Minister Simon Kofe was nominated by the leader of Norway’s Liberal Party, Guri Melby, for his work in highlighting climate change issues.

Environmentalists have won the Nobel Peace Prize in the past, including Kenyan activist Wangari Maathai, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and former US Vice President Al Gore.

Still, “there is no scientific consensus on climate change as an important driver of violent combat”, said Henrik Urdal, director of the Peace Research Institute Oslo, cautioning against a “too simplistic connection between the two.”

The coronavirus pandemic has been front and center of people’s concerns over the past two years and this year the international body tasked with fighting it, the WHO, has again been nominated. “I think the WHO is likely to be discussed in the Committee for this year’s prize,” said Urdal.

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