

LANTOS FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS & JUSTICE

# ANNUAL REPORT

2023



**LANTOS**  
FOUNDATION

for  
human  
rights  
& justice

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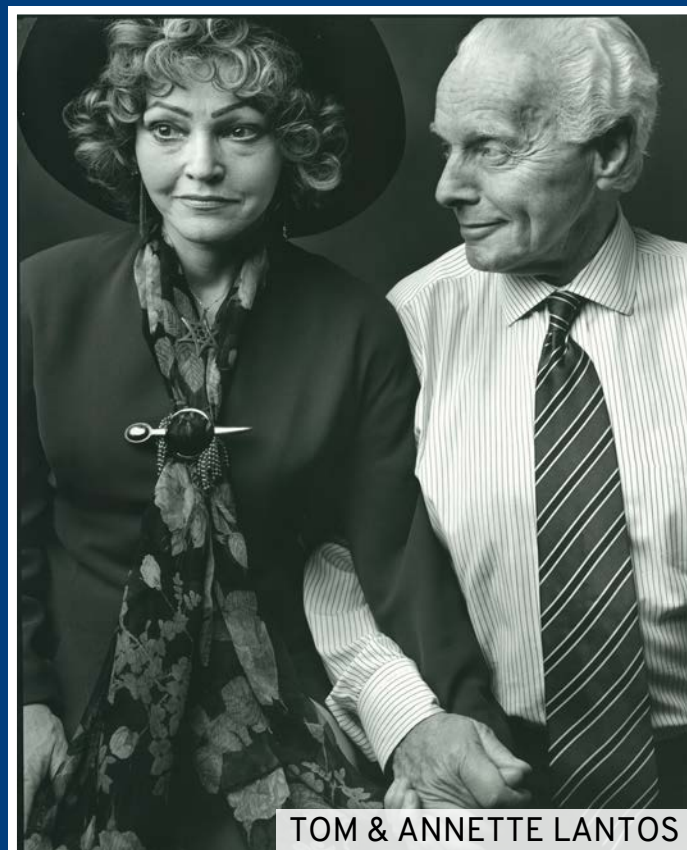
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Front Cover: Rauol Wallenberg Monument in New York City, USA

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TOM & ANNETTE LANTOS



# OUR MISSION

The Lantos Foundation for Human Rights & Justice was established in 2008 to carry on Congressman Tom Lantos' proud legacy as a leading advocate for human rights globally.

***As Tom said, “The veneer of civilization is paper thin. We are its guardians, and we can never rest.”***

At the Lantos Foundation, we strive to be guardians of human rights and justice and to honor Tom’s legacy by: advocating for the United States and other democratic nations to prioritize human rights alongside other foreign policy priorities; raising awareness of human rights violations and pressing issues through our campaigns and initiatives; and supporting and empowering those on the frontlines of human rights struggles.

In 2023, the Foundation marked 15 years since its founding. We carried on with the vital human rights work that has characterized the organization from the beginning. The following report offers an overview of that work.



IRWIN COTLER ACCEPTS THE 2023 LANTOS PRIZE

## CELEBRATING, ELEVATING AND STANDING UP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS HEROES AND ISSUES

Since 2009, the Lantos Foundation has awarded the Lantos Human Rights Prize annually to an individual (or individuals) who embody the spirit of Tom Lantos' quest to carry the noble banner of human rights to every corner of the world and who have made meaningful contributions to the fight for human rights.

On October 24, 2023, the Foundation awarded the 15th Lantos Human Rights Prize to renowned human rights lawyer and former Canadian Minister of Justice Irwin Cotler at a standing room only ceremony on Capitol Hill. It was attended by members of Congress, representatives of the Biden Administration, members of the diplomatic corps, and dozens of human rights leaders and activists.

The ceremony took place against the backdrop of the horrific Hamas attack on Israel on October 7. This made Professor Cotler's selection as the 2023 Prize recipient even more relevant and meaningful, as he is one of the world's most clarion and prescient voices on the issue of combating antisemitism and served as Canada's first-ever Special Envoy on Combating Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial. He delivered powerful remarks (view his complete speech via [YouTube](#)) to a rapt audience.

The following evening, the Lantos Foundation and the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights joined with the Embassy of Canada to jointly host a screening of the documentary *First to Stand: The Cases and Causes of Irwin Cotler*. The screening was followed by a Q&A with Professor Cotler and the filmmaker.

In addition to organizing these events, the Lantos Foundation assisted Professor Cotler and his team with scheduling meetings with members of Congress and the Biden Administration to discuss the hostage crisis in Israel. The Foundation offered further support to Professor Cotler's daughter Michal Cotler-Wunsh, Israel's Special Envoy for Combating Antisemitism, by making connections to relevant members of Congress, the Administration, and the media.



2023 LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS PRIZE CEREMONY



DR. LANTOS SWETT WITH PAUL RUSESABAGINA AFTER HIS RELEASE

When our Lantos Prize laureates or other human rights champions have need of our aid, the Lantos Foundation has proven itself a bold defender. We were among the first human rights groups to publicly decry the illegal rendition of 2011 Lantos Prize laureate Paul Rusesabagina, real-life hero of the film *Hotel Rwanda*, and call for his release after he was kidnapped by the Rwandan government. We coordinated closely with his family, legal team, the U.S. Department of State and other human rights groups for nearly three years to advocate for his freedom. This included filing a Global Magnitsky submission urging the U.S. State and Treasury departments to sanction the Rwandan government officials responsible for his kidnapping, torture, and imprisonment. In March 2023, Paul Rusesabagina – who had been handed a 25-year sentence in a sham trial – was ultimately freed and reunited with his family in the United States.

## EDUCATING AND INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS GUARDIANS

The **Lantos Congressional Fellows Program** first began as a partnership with the Lantos Congressional office in 2001 and has evolved into a program run exclusively by the Lantos Foundation. It offers a unique opportunity for exceptional young people across Europe and Israel to work in the United States Congress, gaining a better understanding of the U.S. political system and the role of human rights in the legislative process. Fellows are carefully selected from an elite pool of post-college and post-graduate level students and serve their fellowships within congressional offices. The Lantos Fellows participate in weekly meetings with leading human rights activists and professionals who share their insight and their professional journeys to both inform and inspire.

Over its 20-year history, more than 100 fellows have participated in the Lantos Fellows Program from countries including Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Scotland, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

Nearly 50 congressional offices have hosted Lantos Fellows, including offices in both the House and Senate, personal offices and committee offices. The 2023 class of Fellows hailed from Bosnia Herzegovina, Germany, Greece, and the U.K. In keeping with the program's bipartisan history, the Fellows were placed with both Republican and Democratic offices.



What motivated you to apply for the Lantos Fellows Program?

"Seeing how ideas of what is right can be transformed into legislation was the most significant motivating force. The transfer from the world of human rights to tangible protections and all that entails really drew me in."

– Neofytos Sakellaridis Mangouras,  
2023 Lantos Fellow

LANTOS CONGRESSIONAL  
FELLOWS PROGRAM





2023 ACTIVIST ARTIST SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Artists represent one of the most powerful but often overlooked groups in the human rights movement. **The Foundation’s Activist Artist Scholarship program**, launched in 2020, elevates art as a means of educating about and advocating for human rights. This annual competition challenges high school seniors to examine the influence of a particular “activist artist” in essay form and show how that artist used his/her medium to influence, inform and inspire action on a human rights issue.

Alternatively, applicants are encouraged to create their own piece of activist art. The Foundation awards a total of \$15,000 in scholarships on an annual basis. Scholarship recipients in 2023 focused on topics such as internet freedom, Vladimir Putin’s campaign of aggression against Ukraine, women’s rights in Iran and Afghanistan, and others.





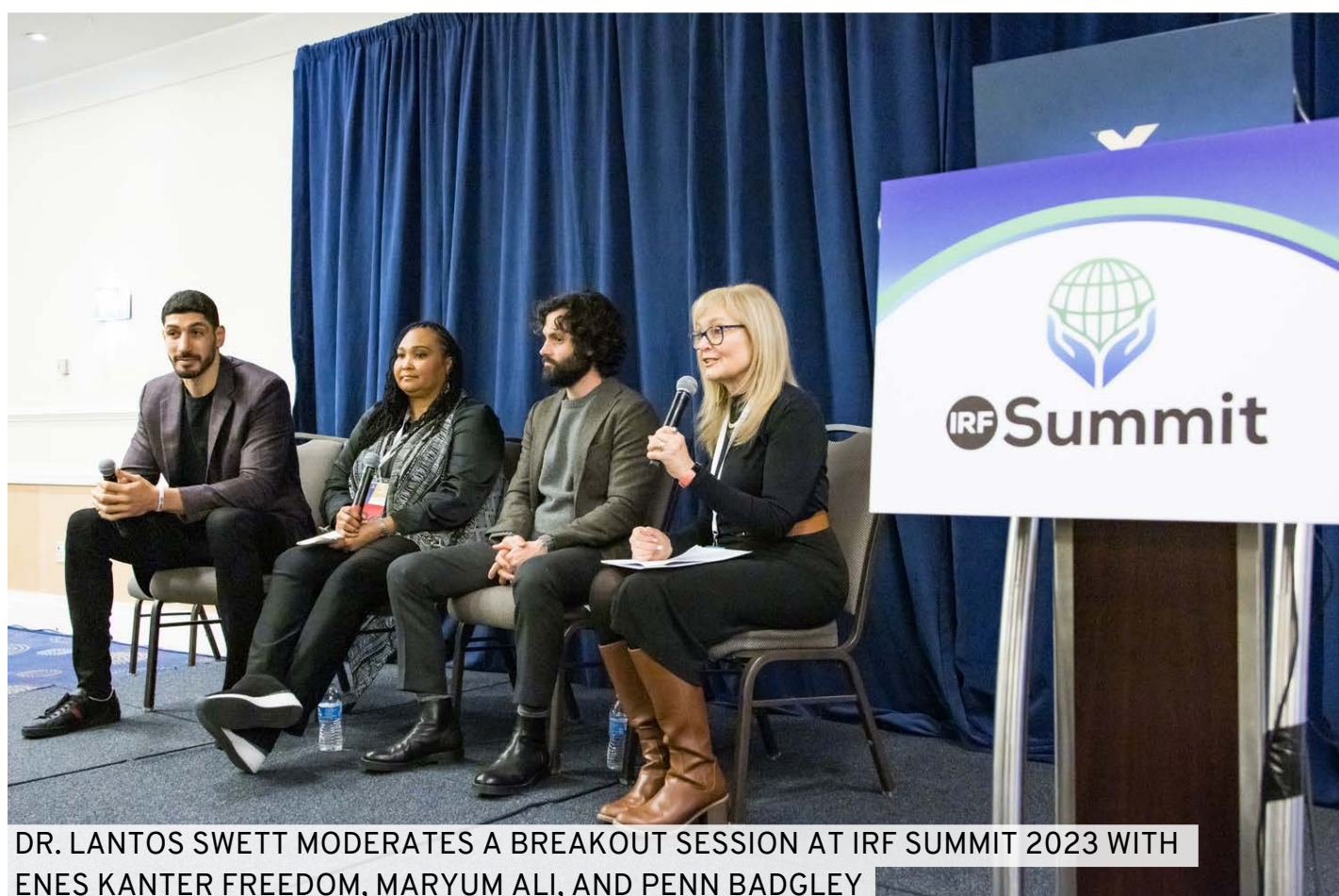
## DEFENDING AND PROMOTING THE WELLSPRING RIGHT OF FREEDOM OF RELIGION, CONSCIENCE AND BELIEF

Since 2021, Foundation President Katrina Lantos Swett has served as the Co-Chair of the International Religious Freedom (IRF) Summit, held in Washington, DC, alongside Ambassador Sam Brownback, the former Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom.

A diverse group of 90 partners, comprised of religious freedom and human rights organizations, as well as faith communities, convene this bipartisan event attended by 1,500 advocates, government actors, activists and members of civil society – representing more than 30 faith traditions – to focus the broader IRF community on collective action.

In 2023, the IRF Summit shifted dates and locations to coincide with the prestigious National Prayer Breakfast. Key speakers at the 2023 Summit included: USAID Administrator Samantha Power, Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme David Beasley, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Mike McCaul, Ukrainian Foreign Affairs Ministry Humanitarian Cooperation Head Bohdan Movchan, Taiwanese Parliament Speaker You Si-kun, and President of the National Endowment for Democracy Damon Wilson.

In her role as Summit Co-Chair, Katrina Lantos Swett speaks out on numerous issues related to freedom of religion, conscience, and belief, and she has become what many consider the leading voice on the center/left for this fundamental human right.



DR. LANTOS SWETT MODERATES A BREAKOUT SESSION AT IRF SUMMIT 2023 WITH ENES KANTER FREEDOM, MARYUM ALI, AND PENN BADGLEY

# ADVOCATING FOR GOVERNMENT LEADERS TO PRIORITIZE HUMAN RIGHTS

Tom Lantos spent nearly three decades as a human rights leader in Congress. Today, congressional advocacy represents a vital and fundamental part of our work. We collaborate directly with the offices of key members of the House and Senate on major human rights initiatives, including specific pieces of legislation (such as the Global Magnitsky Act) and the Defending Freedoms Project – established during Katrina Lantos Swett’s time as Chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). We work closely with member offices to ensure they are up to date on emerging human rights issues, while also serving as a resource to those wanting to dig deeper into a particular issue. This has included Dr. Lantos Swett testifying before congressional committees on numerous occasions.

In 2023, our advocacy work focused specifically on continued congressional support for Ukraine and Israel, sanctions for human rights violators in Russia, China, and other parts of the world, winning the freedom Paul Rusesabagina and continuing to fight for the freedom of political dissidents such as Vladimir Kara-Murza and Joshua Wong, and legislation designed to strengthen freedom of religion or belief around the world, including in Nigeria and Armenia.

The Foundation’s advocacy work is regularly covered by major media outlets such as The New York Times, Fox News, BBC World, Real Clear Politics, The Hill, and more. Dr. Lantos Swett gives numerous interviews to broadcast media and frequently authors opinion editorials on key human rights issues.



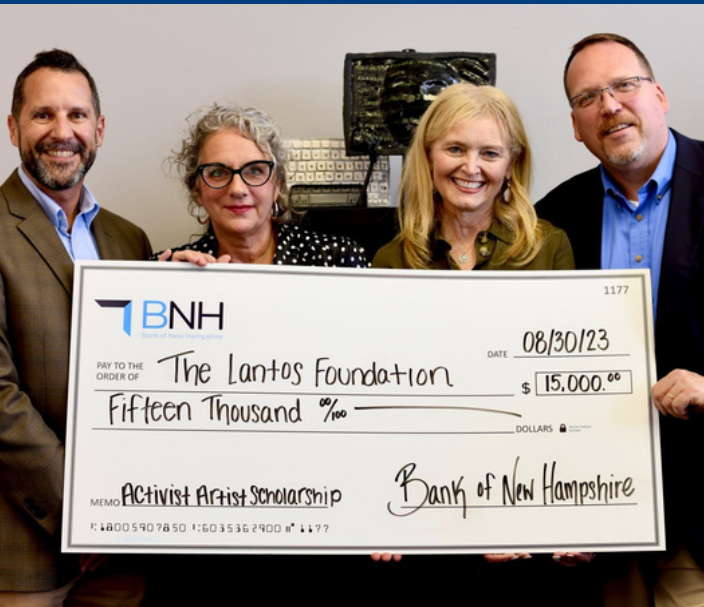
## SUPPORTING FRONT-LINE HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Since its inception in 2008, the Foundation's **Front Line Fund grant program** has made more than 200 small grants to individuals and organizations working on the front lines of human rights struggles around the world. The grants, which average \$2,000, have supported everything from the removal of antisemitic and neo-Nazi graffiti in Canada and Germany; to the establishment of educational human rights programs; to localized work on issues such as human trafficking or organ harvesting.

In keeping with the Foundation's focus on "Activist Artists", the Foundation also supports film and book projects, as well as other human rights-related art initiatives. Front Line Fund grantees are located across the globe, including in the United States, Canada, Germany, India, China, Bangladesh, the Middle East, Russia and more. In 2023, the Lantos Foundation was able to support 11 organizations, most focused on women's empowerment in repressive regimes and advancing the right to freedom of religion or belief.

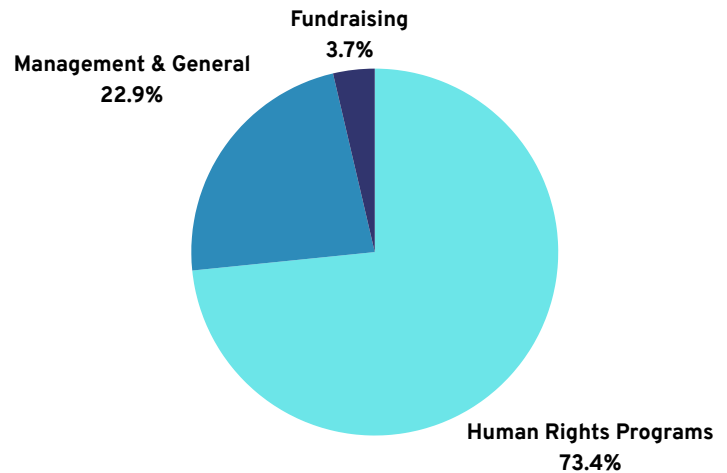


FRONT LINE FUND GRANTEE WOMEN'S VOICES NOW



## 2023 Expenses

**HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAMS:** \$568,092  
**MANAGEMENT & GENERAL:** \$177,613  
**FUNDRAISING:** \$28,316  
**TOTAL:** \$774,021



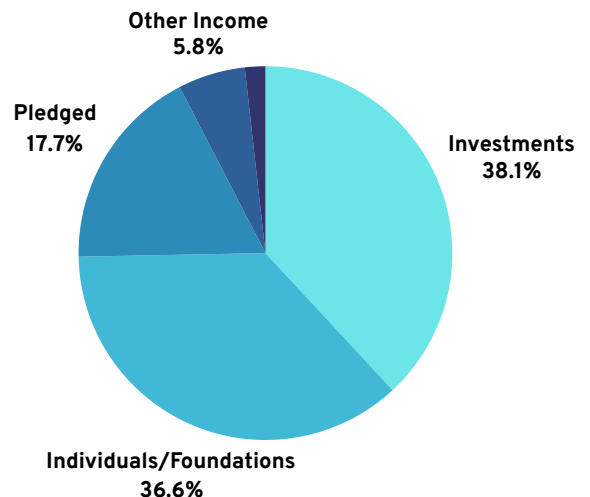
# FINANCIALS

In 2023, the Lantos Foundation had an annual operating budget of \$774,000 with more than 70% of those funds going directly to Foundation programs. The Foundation has a “Gold” rating on GuideStar and a 4-star (94%) rating on Charity Navigator.

In recognition of the Lantos Foundation’s 15-year milestone, we launched our yearlong “Carry On Campaign,” reaching out to our generous existing donors and introducing our work to a network of new supporters in order to ensure the Foundation’s financial viability for the next 15 years and beyond.

## 2023 Revenue\*

**INVESTMENTS:** \$322,562  
**INDIVIDUALS/FOUNDATIONS:** \$309,853  
**PLEGGED:** \$150,000  
**OTHER INCOME:** \$49,266  
**GRANTS:** \$15,000  
**TOTAL:** \$846,681



\*As fiduciary of the International Religious Freedom Summit, the Foundation accepted and processed donations of ~\$1 million USD. None of these funds were used for Lantos operating expenses and were raised exclusively for the Summit. As such, these figures are not included here.

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