COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
OF THE U.S. NATIONAL ACADEMIES OF SCIENCES, ENGINEERING, AND MEDICINE

Since its creation in 1976, the Committee on Human Rights (CHR) of the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (National Academies) has advocated in support of more than 1,000 scientists, engineers, and health professionals around the world. The CHR supports individuals who have been subjected to serious human rights abuses, including prolonged arbitrary detention and torture, solely for their non-violent exercise of internationally recognized human rights. It provides assistance to professional colleagues under threat, and their families, by connecting them to organizations that provide pro bono legal support and other services. The CHR has undertaken several missions to document and call attention to rights abuses involving colleagues and, where possible, to speak directly with persecuted individuals and their families. It also works to raise awareness of the important connections between human rights and science, technology, and health, including by convening experts on topics such as human rights and digital technologies and the role of the scientific community in helping to protect the rights of refugees. Dozens of U.S. National Academy members have served on the CHR during its nearly 45-year history, and thousands more have supported the Committee as “Correspondents”, who appeal for justice in cases involving persecuted colleagues.

The following Nobel Laureates have chaired the CHR:

- Torsten Wiesel
  Chair, 1994-2004
  (Physiology or Medicine, 1981)
- Peter Agre
  Chair, 2005-2007
  (Chemistry, 2003)
- Martin Chalfie
  Chair, 2015-present
  (Chemistry, 2008)

Other Nobel Laureates who have served as CHR members:

- Sidney Altman (Chemistry, 1989)
- Christian Anfinsen (Chemistry, 1972)
- Kenneth Arrow (Economic Sciences, 1972)
- J. Michael Bishop (Physiology or Medicine, 1989)
- Baruch Blumberg (Physiology or Medicine, 1976)
- Robert Curl (Chemistry, 1996)
- Gérard Debreu (Economic Sciences, 1983)
- Gertrude Elion (Physiology or Medicine, 1988)
- Paul Flory (Chemistry, 1974)
- Leland Hartwell (Physiology or Medicine, 2001)
- Jerome Karle (Chemistry, 1985)
- Lawrence Klein (Economic Sciences, 1980)
- Anthony Leggett (Physics, 2003)
- Daniel Nathans (Physiology or Medicine, 1978)
- Charles Townes (Physics, 1964)

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