

List of participating Laureates

1990 - Aung San Suu Kyi (video message)



Aung San Suu Kyi's leadership of Myanmar's pro-democracy struggle was recognised by the award of the Sakharov Prize in 1990, a year before she was also awarded the Nobel Peace prize in 1991.

An international symbol of peaceful resistance in the face of oppression, Suu Kyi, born in 1947, spent most of the two decades after 1990 under house arrest or in prison after Myanmar's ruling military junta cracked down with arrests and bloody reprisals on her National League for Democracy, refusing to hand over power to it despite its overwhelming victory in that year's election.

She was still under house arrest during Myanmar's first elections in two decades on 7 November 2010, but was released six days later. She is now the leader of Myanmar's parliamentary opposition.

In October 2013, Aung San Suu Kyi was finally able to travel to Strasbourg to accept the Sakharov Prize in person.

1993 - Vildana Selimbegovic, Editor-in-Chief of *Oslobodjenje*



Oslobodjenje is a Sarajevo-based daily newspaper. Founded in 1943, it was for many years one of very few independent newspapers operating in the former Yugoslavia.

During the Bosnian War and the Siege of Sarajevo, despite deaths and injuries among their colleagues and the destruction of the newspaper's offices by Serbian artillery, some 70 journalists –

Muslims, Serbs and Croats – continued to work in a nuclear shelter in the cellar of their building in Sarajevo, risking their lives so that *Oslobodjenje* could continue to appear.

Zlatko Dizdarević, one of the editors at the time, and later an ambassador for Bosnia, said that their aim was to preserve and defend Bosnia-Herzegovina as a multiethnic state.

Oslobodjenje will be represented in Strasbourg by its Editor-in-Chief, Vildana Selimbegovic.

1994 - Taslima Nasreen



Born in Bangladesh in 1962, Taslima Nasreen started writing when she was 13, and is known for her powerful writings on the oppression of women and unflinching criticism of religion, despite her forced exile and multiple fatwas calling for her death. She is an award-winning writer and her works have been translated in thirty different languages.

Also a physician, secular humanist and human rights activist, Nasreen feels her Bengali identity strongly. However, because of her thoughts and ideas some of her books are banned in Bangladesh, and she has been banned from Bengal, both from Bangladesh and the West Bengal part of India.

When she won the 1994 Sakharov Prize, she had already sought refuge in Europe, living in exile in France and Sweden. In her acceptance speech, she said she came from a part of the world where social tensions and human difficulties were unbearable: as a writer, she could not close her eyes to the daily suffering and starvation.

A few years later, in September 1998, Taslima Nasreen returned to Bangladesh to her dying mother. As soon as this news came out, religious fundamentalists once again called for the writer to be put to death. A court issued a warrant for her arrest and threatened to confiscate her assets. The EP answered Taslima Nasreen's appeal for help and, in a resolution, called on the government of Bangladesh to protect her life and ensure her safety. In January 1999, in the face of continuing threats, Nasreen had to leave her homeland once again. She is now living in New Delhi.

In a visit to the European Parliament in June 2013, Nasreen urged support for the secular movements in Bangladesh to counteract the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, arguing that the latter is especially detrimental to women's rights. She took a stand against fundamentalism in all religions.

1995 - Leyla Zana



Leyla Zana in 1991 became the first Kurdish woman to win a seat in the Turkish parliament. She was also in prison for 10 years for her political activism, deemed to be against the unity of the country by Turkish courts.

At 15 she married the former mayor of Diyarbakir, Mehdi Zana, who was jailed during military rule in the 1980s for "separatism". Starting school at 23, she earned primary and secondary diplomas in three years, and eventually took on an unsolicited leadership role as her personal development was seen as virtually synonymous with the realisation of fundamental rights for the Kurdish population. Overwhelmingly elected to Parliament, she caused scandal in her swearing-in ceremony by saying in Kurdish 'I take this oath for the brotherhood between the Turkish people and the Kurdish people'. Speaking Kurdish in the public arena was then a criminal offense.

In 1994 she was stripped of her parliamentary immunity and sentenced to 15 years for "treason and membership in the armed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)", which she denied.

The EP awarded her the Sakharov Prize in 1995 for her courageous defence of human rights and commitment to forging a peaceful, democratic resolution to conflicts between the Turkish Government and its Kurdish population.

In 2004 after the European Court of Human Rights ruled that she had not received a fair and independent trial, Zana was finally able to address the EP in person at her Prize-award ceremony.

In 2012, she was sentenced to another 10 years jail for "spreading terrorist propaganda". As an MP, re-elected in 2011, she has parliamentary immunity until 2015.

In June 2012, Zana met Prime Minister Erdoğan after saying publicly that she hoped he would solve the Kurdish issue. Her initiative served as the groundwork of the negotiation process thanks to which PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, in March 2013, made his historic call for the PKK to move from armed resistance to democratic political struggle.

1996 - Wei Jingsheng



The "father of the Chinese democracy movement" lives in exile but remains an active leader of the opposition to the Communist dictatorship in China.

He is the author of *The Courage to Stand Alone: letters from Prison and Other Writings*, articles he initially wrote on toilet paper in jail, and now published in more than a dozen languages.

He was sentenced to jail twice for 29 years in total and served more than 18 years for his activities and writings in support of democracy, including his ground breaking 1978 essay *The Fifth Modernization: Democracy*. This began as a signed wall poster on the Democracy Wall in Beijing, on which workers, artists and intellectuals exercised their freedom of expression. It caused a sensation, not only because it openly assaulted the 'people's democratic dictatorship' of the Communists, but also because he dared to sign it with both his real name and contact information.

In the *Exploration*, an underground magazine Wei founded and edited, he wrote *Democracy or a New Dictatorship?* in which he identified Deng Xiaoping, then Communist leader, as the new dictator. Arrested three days later, Wei was convicted of "counter-revolution" and jailed for 15 years in 1979. He was on death row, then in solitary confinement, then in forced labour camps under strict supervision till 1993, when he was released due to China's decision to apply for the 2000 Olympic Games. Within six months he was arrested a second time, tried again, convicted of "counter-revolution" and sentenced to another 14 years.

At the time of his Sakharov Prize award in 1996 he was still in prison. In 1997, after overwhelming international pressure, Wei was taken from his cell and put on a plane to the United States. He maintains that he was not freed, but that his exile is further punishment.

From Washington, Wei leads the Wei Jingsheng Foundation, the Overseas Chinese Democracy Coalition and the Asia Democracy Alliance.

1997 - Salima Ghezali



Salima Ghezali is an Algerian journalist, writer and women's rights activist. In the 1980s she became involved in the Algerian women's movement, amongst other things as a founder member of Women of Europe and the Maghreb and as editor-in-chief of *NYSSA*, the women's publication she herself founded.

A teacher turned journalist, she edited the French-language Algerian weekly *La Nation* from 1994, the most widely-read weekly in Algeria. As the 11-year civil war between the government and Islamist rebel groups, which began in 1991 raged, *La Nation* advocated political dialogue for all sides in the war, human rights and freedom of expression for all, and criticized both government and Islamic groups - the only paper to do so. For this, the paper was seized and suspended many times, and finally banned in 1996, after the appearance in *Le Monde Diplomatique* of Ghezali's report on the human rights situation in Algeria.

The publication of *La Nation* resumed in 2011 on the Internet. In a Letter from the editor, Ghezali explained the reasons motivating her: 'we cannot be indifferent to the dynamics of the young people in the Arab world who are fighting for their dignity and freedom. We cannot be indifferent to what is happening in our country. We want the Algerian people to be happy, because they deserve it. We want strong institutions, better human resources in a real democracy and the rule of law'. She concluded with a wish 'for a better Algeria, where good governance is the rule'.

Salima Ghezali has won a range of human rights awards such as the World Press Review Award, Olof Palm Prize and Rothko Chapel Oscar Romero Award. She continues her activism on women's rights, human rights and democracy in Algeria.

In October 2013 she gave a Sakharov Lecture in Marseille, France and debated with Members of the EP's Sub Committee on Human Rights, civil society and students.

1999 - José Alexandre "Xanana" Gusmão



Xanana Gusmão is known as the Mandela of Timor. Recognised as a leader and symbol of the Timorese resistance who aimed to bring an end to the armed conflict for independence from Indonesia, he had just been released from prison, where he had served seven years of a 20-year jail term on charges of separatism, when the EP awarded him the Sakharov Prize in December 1999.

When the Portuguese withdrew from East Timor, Indonesia began a policy of destabilising its neighbour. On 7 December 1975, Indonesia invaded. Gusmão went underground and in 1978 became leader of the military wing of the Revolutionary Front for the Independence of East Timor (FRETILIN).

The violence which accompanied the invasion cost an estimated 200 000 lives, but failed to break the people's determination to resist. Xanana Gusmão sought to secure a peaceful solution to the conflict by proposing a peace plan and talks under UN supervision to the Indonesian Government. In 1986 he managed to bring together the various political and social groupings to form the Timorese National Resistance Council (TNRC).

However, on 20 November 1992 Xanana Gusmão was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment, subsequently reduced to 20 years. But the Timorese resistance held and massive international pressure was brought to bear on Indonesia for his release. When freed in September 1999 - shortly after the referendum of 30 August, in which 80% of the population of East Timor had voted for independence - Gusmão promised 'to do everything in my power to bring peace to East Timor and my people'.

In April 2002, in the first free presidential elections held in East Timor, Gusmão was elected with almost 83% of the votes. On 20 May 2002 UN Secretary General Kofi Annan officially declared the Democratic Republic of East Timor an independent state and Gusmão served as President until May 2007. In 2008 he survived an assassination attempt. He currently serves as Prime Minister.

2000 - Fernando Savater of ¡Basta Ya!



The pressure group ¡Basta Ya! (Enough is Enough) consists of people who work for human rights, democracy and tolerance in the Basque country. Its members come from different ideological backgrounds but agree on three fundamental stances:

- against terrorism of any sort, regardless of origin or intensity;
- support for all victims of terrorism or of political violence;
- defence of the rule of law, the constitution and the statute of

autonomy of the Basque country.

Fundamental freedoms and human rights are under threat in the Basque country from terrorism by ETA and related groups. Thousands of people endured intimidation, extortion, blackmail and attacks. They are unable to express themselves freely or exercise their rights without risking reprisals.

The members of ¡Basta Ya! have risked their lives to fight terrorism. They aim to raise awareness through actions designed to display solidarity with all those who oppose terrorism and support democratic values.

¡Basta Ya! will be represented in Strasbourg by philosopher, author and long-time anti-terrorism campaigner Fernando Savater.

2001 - Nurit Peled-Elhanan



An Israeli born in 1949, Nurit Peled-Elhanan is a university professor of comparative literature. She represents all Israelis who are committed to a negotiated solution to the conflict and who clearly acknowledge the right of two peoples and two states to exist side by side on an equal footing.

Her 14-year-old daughter, Smadar, was killed in an attack carried out by a Palestinian suicide bomber. Nurit Peled-Elhanan did not give in to despair, but instead focused on the responsibility borne

by those who implement a short-sighted policy that refuses to acknowledge the rights of others and fuels hatred and conflict. She founded the Israeli-Palestinian Bereaved Families Forum.

Speaking in 2004, Nurit Peled-Elhanan said, "It is high time that we define what is happening in the Middle East in terms of criminality rather than in political and military terms ... It is time to teach how to recognise false ideals and how to oppose the terrible misuse of ideals ... It is high time ... for us to become individuals again instead of nations, individuals instead of troops, and to work together to save those children who are still alive by saying, 'enough is enough'."

2001 - Dom Zacarias Kamwenho



In 1999, renewed awareness of the need to fight for peace and human rights began to increase among the Angolan people, encouraged by the efforts of church leaders and various civil society bodies to foster "inclusive national reconciliation".

Archbishop Zacarias Kamwenho is in the vanguard of this peace movement. He expressed his firm, impartial and determined views to all parties of the conflict in an effort to achieve lasting peace through political dialogue after 26 years of civil war. He was awarded the Sakharov Prize in 2001 in recognition of his untiring efforts for peace.

The ceasefire which came about in 2002 after the killing of UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi, the peace talks and the general climate of support for democratisation can largely be attributed to the campaign conducted by Dom Zacarias Kamwenho and other religious and civil leaders.

In 2003 Archbishop Kamwenho resigned as chair of the Bishops' Conference of Angola and São Tome but continued to work actively for the realisation of democracy, respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights, the implementation of the rule of law and lasting national reconciliation. In 2012, the now-retired archbishop called on Angolans to exercise their right to vote.

2002 - Rosa María Payá Acevedo representing Oswaldo José Payá Sardiñas



An outspoken critic of Fidel Castro and injustice in Cuba, Oswaldo Payá founded the Christian Liberation Movement. In 1997 he drew up the Varela Project, a campaign dedicated to gathering signatures in support of a referendum on laws guaranteeing civil rights in Cuba, free pluralist elections, the release of all political prisoners, and economic and social reforms.

Oswaldo Payá presented the project to the National Assembly of People's Power in 2002. However, the majority of those involved in the campaign were sentenced to long-term prison sentences for "offences against national independence and territorial integrity".



In July 2012, Oswaldo Paya died in a mysterious car crash. The Christian Liberation Movement continues to call for clarification of the circumstances of his death. His family have rejected the official verdict of accidental death, and have been victims of harassment and threats by Cuban security agents.

Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament, stated: "Oswaldo Payá's ideas will survive as his work and commitment had inspired a generation of Cuban activists who were following his example in promoting political freedom and human rights".

Oswaldo Payá will be represented in Strasbourg by his daughter, Rosa María, who has denounced her father's death before the UN Human Rights Council and other international organisations. Ms. Payá is herself a member of the Christian Liberation Movement, and has gained international attention for her campaign for a referendum that would allow Cubans to decide their own future.

2004 - Zhanna Litvina, Chairwoman of the Belarusian Association of Journalists



Representing almost 1,000 media workers, the Belarusian Association of Journalists works under extremely difficult conditions to protect the legitimate rights of journalists, who are often the victims of intimidation, harassment, criminal prosecution and expatriation.

In a number of individual cases, prompt intervention by the BAJ has enabled those responsible for death threats against journalists to be brought to account. Despite the lack of an independent judiciary, the BAJ's lawyers have frequently been successful in representing journalists and the media in court.

An important part of the Association's work involves increasing public awareness of the constitutional right to freedom of information and of how people can exercise their rights. Through its Law Centre for Media Protection, the BAJ also works to improve the regulatory framework.

The Belarusian Association of Journalists continues, despite the hostility of the regime and harsh conditions in which it operates, to work for the promotion of independent journalism and freedom of speech in Belarus.

2005 - Hauwa Ibrahim



Hauwa Ibrahim is a human rights lawyer from Abuja, Nigeria who fights tirelessly against religious fundamentalism. Since 1999, she has worked as a defence counsel in over 150 cases, many of which have involved women accused of adultery and sentenced to death by stoning. It was her ability to capture international public opinion that made it possible to save the lives of Amina Lawa, Safiya Hussaini and Hafsatu Abukabar.

"I do not comment on the Koran", she said. "My only objective is to have the fundamental rights of each and every human being respected, like the rule of law and the right to a fair trial".

Hauwa Ibrahim argued successfully that Sharia law requires courts to respect the procedural and substantive rights guaranteed by Sharia law as well as the Nigerian Constitution, and that the international human rights treaties to which Nigeria is signatory must be observed.

Hauwa Ibrahim's cause now resonates beyond Nigeria's borders. But for her the most difficult task - making her voice heard within her own country - is yet to be achieved.

2005 - Berta Soler, President of the Damas de Blanco



With the award of the Sakharov Prize to the Damas de Blanco, the European Parliament recognised their courage and commitment to the cause of human rights in Cuba, and drew international attention to the continuing imprisonment of 75 political dissidents in 2003.

Every Sunday, the Damas peacefully walk through the streets, calling for the liberation of all those arbitrarily incarcerated. When their protest started, it was the first time in 47 years that women in Cuba had gone out into the streets to protest against unjust imprisonment.

At the time of the awarding of the Prize, the Cuban authorities did not authorise the Damas' representatives to leave the country to receive it. In 2013, following the European Parliament's continued insistence on their right to receive the award in person, the Damas finally travelled to Brussels to accept the Prize.

Despite harassment, threats and a recent increase in violence by the Cuban authorities, the Damas de Blanco continue to stand up for the rights of Cuban political prisoners and the dignity of all Cuban people. Their demand for justice and their call for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners is carried forward by a peaceful struggle.

2005 - Christophe Deloire, Director-General of Reporters Without Borders



Reporters Without Borders campaigns for press freedom around the world, and defends and supports journalists and other media workers subjected to persecution and censorship.

According to Reporters Without Borders, more than a third of the world's population live in countries where they do not enjoy press freedom. In 2012, it recorded 50 journalists killed and 147 imprisoned.

Reporters Without Borders vigorously condemns any attack on press freedom worldwide and keeps it in the public eye through the media and public awareness campaigns. It also offers practical assistance to journalists who work in war zones.

In 2002, with the creation of the Damocles Network, Reporters Without Borders acquired a judicial arm. In order to ensure that those who persecute journalists are brought to trial, the Network provides victims with legal services and representation.

Reporters Without Borders' multilingual website keeps a daily tally of attacks on press freedom worldwide and offers the opportunity of signing online petitions in support of imprisoned journalists. It publishes articles which have been banned in their country of origin, hosts newspapers that have been closed down in their homeland and serves as a forum for journalists who have been silenced by the authorities of their country.

Reporters Without Borders will be represented in Strasbourg by its Director-General, Christophe Deloire.

2006 - Aliaksandr Milinkevich



Aliaksandr Milinkevich is a leading figure in the democratic opposition of Belarus. He has called relentlessly for a truly democratic future for Belarus and presented himself as a real alternative to the authoritarianism of Aliaksandr Lukashenka.

In 2005 he was chosen as a presidential candidate of the United Democratic Opposition, and he was able to keep the Belarusian opposition together to form a common front throughout the presidential elections of 2006. The results of the elections, in which Aliaksandr Milinkevich

officially received only 6% of the votes, were assessed by the European Union as neither free nor fair, and subject to fraud.

The human rights situation in Belarus has deteriorated since the elections of 2006. The authorities have enacted a law criminalizing behaviour deemed critical to the state. The silencing and imprisonment of journalists, activists, and other critics found to be politically inconvenient by the current regime still continues.

Following a peaceful demonstration in 2006, Mr. Milinkevich was himself imprisoned for 15 days, together with other opposition members, for taking part in an "unsanctioned rally". Despite such persecution, Aliaksandr Milinkevich remains committed to his fight for democracy and the return of fundamental rights to the Belarusian people.

2007 - Salih Mahmoud Mohamed Osman



Salih Osman is a lawyer who has worked with the Sudan Organisation Against Torture (SOAT) to provide legal representation to people who have been arbitrarily detained and tortured by the Sudanese government.

Over two decades, during Sudan's various civil wars, Osman has risked his life to provide legal and medical aid to victims of the conflict. He fights court cases on behalf of those charged by the Sudanese government, and has been successful in overturning or reducing sentences of death or amputation.

Salih Osman and SOAT have also been active in cataloguing crimes that have taken place – particularly in the Darfur region – and they are engaged in a campaign to have rape prosecuted as a war crime. He is also actively involved in the protection of over 2 million Sudanese who have been forced to abandon their homes.

Salih Osman's fight against injustice in Sudan has come at a personal cost. Members of his own family have suffered at the hands of militias, and he himself has been detained and tortured.

Salih Osman served as a Member of the Sudanese Parliament for the opposition between 2005 and 2010. He works on legal reform and focuses on promoting the rule of law.

2008 - Zeng Jinyang representing Hu Jia



Hu Jia was represented in Strasbourg by his wife and fellow human rights activists, Zeng Jinyang, who was a nominee for the Sakharov Prize in 2007.

Hu Jia is a prominent Chinese human rights activist and dissident. His work has focused on calls for an official inquiry into the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, and HIV/AIDS advocacy and as well as raising environmental concerns.



In 2008, after addressing Members of the European Parliament via a conference call during a public meeting of the Subcommittee on Human Rights, he was arrested and charged with "inciting subversion of state power". He was found guilty and sentenced to three-and-a-half years in jail.

He was released in 2011, but continued to suffer persecution. Security agents stationed outside his home would not allow him even to go and buy food, and his internet connection was interrupted.

In September 2013, Hu Jia was placed under house arrest for criticising the Chinese Communist Party during a television interview.

2009 - Oleg Orlov of Memorial and Lyudmila Alexeyeva (video message)

Memorial is a Russian NGO which, since its foundation in 1988, has documented, monitored and strived to promote the truth about violations of human rights in Russia and other former states of the USSR, in order to ensure their democratic future.



Memorial has set up a database of over 1,300,000 names of persecuted people, with the aim of building a publicly available archive of historical documentation of the consequences of totalitarian repression.

Oleg Orlov, a lifelong human rights defender and the head of the Council of Memorial, was found guilty in a civil defamation suit in 2009, having accused Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov of being responsible for Memorial member Natalia Estemirova's

death. In 2010, Orlov and some 100 others were arrested in Moscow during a peaceful demonstration.



Lyudmila Alexeyeva, the head and co-founder of the Moscow Helsinki Group, is renowned for campaigning for fair trials of arrested dissidents and for their objective coverage in the media. Since 2009, Lyudmila Alexeyeva has been an active participant in Strategy-31 – the protest rallies of citizens on Moscow's Triumphalnaya Square in defence of the 31st Article (on the Freedom of Assembly) of the Russian Constitution. She was detained during one of these protests, prompting Jerzy Buzek, then President of the European Parliament to appeal for the release of

Alexeyeva and other Russian human rights activists.

2010 - Guillermo Fariñas



A doctor of psychology, independent journalist and political dissident in Cuba, Guillermo Fariñas has over the years conducted over 20 hunger strikes to protest against the Cuban regime, with the aim of achieving peaceful political change, freedom of speech and freedom of expression in his country.

As a journalist, he founded the independent press agency – Cubanacán Press – with the aim of informing the rest of the world of the situation of political prisoners in Cuba. Eventually, he was

forced by the authorities to close his press agency.

In 2010 Fariñas ended his latest hunger strike after 130 days, after the Cuban government announced it was in the process of freeing 52 political prisoners. He had begun his strike after the controversial death of Orlando Zapata Tamayo, a prisoner of conscience, who died after 82 days of hunger strike.

Guillermo Fariñas could not participate in the 2010 Sakharov Prize award ceremony in Strasbourg because he was not allowed to leave Cuba. In July 2013 he was finally able to travel to Strasbourg to receive the Prize.

2011 - Ahmed El Zuber El Senussi



Ahmed El Senussi is Libya's longest-serving "prisoner of conscience". He was accused of conspiracy in an attempted coup against the Gaddafi regime in 1970 and spent 31 years in prison.

He was released in August 2010, alongside dozens of other political prisoners. As a member of the National Transitional Council set up in 2011 as the Libyan revolution toppled the Gaddafi regime, he was in charge of political prisoners. He now continues his courageous work to improve human rights and the rule of law in Libya and considers the Sakharov Prize he received to be an

award to the Libyan people.

He was a main speaker at the Sakharov Prize Network annual public event held in Brussels at the European Parliament, in October 2012, debating the aftermath of the revolution and armed conflict in Libya and the future of democracy in Arab countries following the Arab Spring.

2011 - Razan Zaitouneh (written message)



Razan Zaitouneh is a Syrian journalist and human rights lawyer who, a year after being awarded the Sakharov Prize, was still in hiding after the Syrian police arrested her husband and her brother-in-law and Syrian state television defamed her as a foreign agent.

In spite of the repression, she continued to speak out for human rights in her country and gathering information about the atrocities being committed in Syria through a network of political activists and

human rights defenders, to tell the world about them through the foreign media.

Born in 1977, Razan Zaitouneh started to practise law in 2001, and in that same year became a defence lawyer for political prisoners and co-founded the Human Rights Association in Syria. In 2005, she set up the Syrian Human Rights Information Link and

became an active member of the Committee to Support Families of Political Prisoners in Syria.

In 2011, she was also awarded the Anna Politkovskaya Award by Reach All Women in WAR, which accords recognition to women defending human rights in warzones.

She refuses to leave Syria until the fighting in the country is over.

2012 - Shirin Ebadi representing Nasrin Sotoudeh



A lawyer and former judge, Ms. Ebadi founded the Defenders of Human Rights Center, and in 2003 she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Nasrin Sotoudeh is a human rights lawyer who was sentenced to six years in the notorious Evin prison for fearlessly defending dissenters arrested in the 2009 mass protests against the presidential election they believed was fraudulent. Political prisoners sought her representation because she was strong enough and brave enough to stand up to the judicial authorities and intelligence officers. She is also a strong opponent of the death penalty for minors.

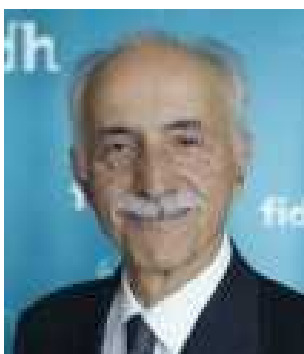


While imprisoned, Nasrin Sotoudeh went on hunger strike in protest against pressure on her family and harsh prison conditions. She had been forbidden a family visit for refusing to be forced to wear the chador (which, unlike the hijab, is not required by law), and her 12-year-old daughter was subjected to a travel ban and forced to

appear in court.

Sotoudeh was released in September 2013, but remains banned from travelling. She will be represented in Strasbourg by fellow Iranian human rights defender Shirin Ebadi.

2012 - Karim Lahidji representing Jafar Panahi



Mr Lahidji is President of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), a coalition of more than 116 human organizations around the world. He is the founder of the Iranian League for Defence of Human Rights and the Iranian Association of Jurists.

A human rights activist since 1958, when he was a student at the University of Tehran, Mr Lahidji defended political prisoners and was exposed to arrests and assaults and even a bombing attempt. He was forced to flee Iran after his 15-year old son was arrested, smuggling his family out shortly after arriving in Paris.



Jafar Panahi is an Iranian film-maker who has been banned from making films for 20 years. An outspoken supporter of the Iranian opposition Green movement and a critic of President Ahmedinajad, he was also sentenced to six years in prison for "propaganda against the Islamic Republic". He now lives in a sort of limbo, banned from leaving the country or talking to the media and yet fighting the curbs on his freedom of expression.

Jafar Panahi has focused his lens on the hardship of life in Iran for children, the impoverished and especially women since the Islamic revolution, incurring the wrath and censorship of the Iranian authorities. His films are banned in his homeland and have landed him in jail more than once. In 2010 he was arrested together with his wife, daughter and 15 friends.

Jafar Panahi has not yet been able to receive the Sakharov Prize in person, due to a travel ban imposed by the Iranian government. He will be represented in Strasbourg by Iranian human rights defender Karim Lahidji.