

## SAKHAROV PRIZE NETWORK NEWSLETTER 06/2017

### EP INSISTS ON GUARANTEES FOR THE WORK OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN CUBA

05-07-17: When giving its consent to the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Cuba, the European Parliament emphasised in a [resolution](#) the importance of an institutionalised EU-Cuba human rights dialogue and **urged for the establishment of guarantees for the work of human rights defenders** in the country. Indeed, 410 arbitrary detentions took place in the Cuba only during the month of June. **2005 Sakharov Prize Laureate Damas de Blanco** are among the most persecuted groups. Dozens of Damas were detained in June and July during their weekly protests against politically-motivated imprisonment, some were beaten up and received death threats from the security forces. Ms Navarro and Ms Soler were prevented from leaving Cuba to join a round table at the European Parliament to speak about human rights and democracy.

[Cuban Commission report](#), [Diario Las Americas](#), [CUBANET](#) (in Spanish)

### Repeated calls to release Raif Badawi after 5 years of detention

17-06-17: As Saudi blogger and **2015 Sakharov Prize Laureate Raif Badawi** has served half of his ten-year jail sentence, his children have called upon Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to demand their father's release, in an emotional [video message](#). **2005 Sakharov Prize Laureate Reporters Without Borders** also reiterated calls for Raif Badawi's immediate and unconditional release. [RSF](#)

### Survivors of sexual violence gathered in Geneva at the initiative of Dr Mukwege

27 to 30-06-17: With support of the **Sakharov Prize Network**, the Mukwege Foundation brought together 30 survivors of sexual violence coming from ten war-torn countries to discuss launching a **Survivor Action Network**. The network aims are to give a voice to survivors of sexual violence, encourage their healing process, and call upon States to act against sexual violence. **EP Vice-President Ulrike Lunacek** addressed the event in a video message. A few weeks earlier, on the eve of the International Day to Eliminate Sexual Violence in Conflict, **2014 Sakharov Prize Laureate Dr Mukwege** denounced the large-scale use of sexual violence as a "cheap and terribly effective" weapon of war. He stressed that EU Member States in particular "have the possibility, capacity and duty to unite their efforts to uphold the ban on using sexual violence, for instance through EU sanctions".

[Mukwege Foundation](#), [VOA News](#), [Dr Mukwege's op-ed](#)

### Wei Jingsheng spoke against human rights violations in China during protests at the G20 Summit

04-07-17: At the occasion of the G20 Summit, **1996 Sakharov Prize Laureate Wei Jingsheng** travelled to Germany to protest against human rights violations in China. He called for the release of the terminally ill Nobel Prize Laureate Liu Xiaobo. [Wei Jingsheng foundation](#)

### The international community's reaction to China's human rights record is weak, activists say

21-06-17: Several Chinese human rights defenders deplore the declining attention of the international community to human rights in China, despite a continuously degrading situation. **2008 Sakharov Prize Laureate Hu Jia denounced that the international community is more and more afraid** of criticizing the Chinese Communist Party, due both to economic interests and the priority given to cooperation with Beijing on climate change, security and the fight against terrorism. The Chinese Communist Party has however not loosened its grip on the Chinese society. One of the latest examples of this is preventing activists, including **Hu Jia**, from commemorating the 28th anniversary of the 1989 crackdown in Tiananmen Square. [Politico](#)

### Belarusian human rights organisations urge their national authorities to respect human rights

30-06-17: Ahead of the next meeting of the EU-Belarus Human Rights Dialogue, several Belarusian NGOs, including **2004 Sakharov Prize Laureate Belarusian Association of Journalists**, released a [press](#)

[statement](#) expressing concern over the “sharp deterioration in the human rights situation in the country starting from March 2017”. The statement denounces arbitrary detentions, crackdown on peaceful protests, as well as interference with the work of journalists. It calls upon the Belarusian authorities to “take effective measures to ensure the adequate protection of human rights, to prevent prosecution for political reasons and to release all the political prisoners”. **The NGOs also call the EU to elaborate a plan with priority steps** to be implemented by the Belarusian government.

#### **Lamya Haji Bashar at the European Parliament to discuss the future of Singal**

12-07-17: **2016 Sakharov Prize Laureate Lamya Haji Bashar** will come to Brussels to take part in a discussion on the future of Northern Iraq, subsequent to the liberation of Mosul. The discussion, held at the initiative of the Yazidi Friendship Group in the European Parliament, is hosted by **MEP Weidenholzer**.

#### **Nadia Murad returns to the northern Iraqi village where she was captured and enslaved by ISIS**

02-06-17: **2016 Sakharov Prize Laureate Nadia Murad** visited Kojo, the Iraqi village where she was captured by the ISIS in 2014. The settlement was retaken from ISIS a few days before her visit by Popular Mobilisation, an Iraqi Shi'ite paramilitary force. Murad also went to the sites where ISIS committed crimes that the UN described as genocide against the Yazidi community. Murad said during the visit: “We hoped our fate would be to be killed like the men instead of being sold and raped by Syrians, Iraqis ... Tunisians and Europeans”. She also called for the liberation of the 3,000 women from ISIS captivity and for documenting the graves of killed Yazidis. [Reuters](#), [Aljazeera](#)

#### **The EP calls to stop persecution of Yunus, Interpol refuses extradition**

13-06-17: Interpol denied Azerbaijani authorities' request to arrest and forcibly return **2014 Sakharov Prize Finalist Leyla Yunus** and her husband Arif Yunus to Azerbaijan. The European Parliament, in an [urgency resolution](#) adopted in June 2017, had drawn “the attention of Interpol to this case as being motivated on political grounds” and had called on the Azerbaijani authorities to “discontinue the ongoing persecution of **Leyla and Arif Yunus**”. 26 international organisations also published [an open letter](#) calling upon Interpol to prevent the arrest of the Yunus spouses.

#### **Kofi Annan warns of grave danger of political instability in Democratic Republic of Congo**

16-06-17: **2003 Sakharov Prize Laureate - Kofi Annan** has warned that the failure to organise elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo since 2016, as prescribed in the national constitution, has caused acute political crisis in the country as the incumbent president Kabila stays in power. The crisis led to violence that caused hundreds of deaths since August 2016. [PRESSTV](#)

#### **Aung San Suu Kyi holds that UN investigations on Rohingya would stir tensions in the country**

12-06-17: **1990 Sakharov Prize Laureate** and Burmese leader **Aung San Suu Kyi** said during her official visit in Sweden that the UN planned investigation on abuses committed by the Burmese security forces against the Rohingya community could worsen the tensions in Burma. The UN appointed an expert group in May to conduct the investigations. Burma's leader suggested she would only accept recommendations from the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, a body established by Suu Kyi and directed by ex-UN secretary general and **2003 Sakharov Prize Laureate Kofi Annan**. [europapress](#)

#### **EP URGENCY RESOLUTIONS ON AZERBAIJANI JOURNALIST A. MUKHTARLI, PAKISTAN AND INDONESIA**

15-06-17: In three resolutions adopted during its June plenary session, the European Parliament condemned the abduction of the Azerbaijani journalist **Afgan Mukhtarli** in Georgia and his subsequent detention in [Azerbaijan](#), while calling for the release of all political prisoners remaining behind bars in the country. The EP also voiced concern over the degradation of the human rights situation in [Pakistan](#) and repeated its calls for the abolition of the death penalty. Furthermore, MEPs expressed their concerns over the growing intolerance towards the LGBTI community in [Indonesia](#) and called upon the authorities to decriminalise homosexuality.

**On line info:** [Sakharov Prize Network website](#)