



FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARAB SPRING MARRED BY CHAOS, RISE OF STATE VIOLENCE IN THE REGION

January 2016 marks the 5th anniversary of the 2011 Sakharov Prize laureate, the Arab Spring. In both Tunisia and Egypt, authorities have cracked down on demonstrations commemorating the anniversary. **In Tunisia**, the bedrock of the spring, demonstrations over unemployment, currently at 15%, have been spreading across the country since mid-January and have led to violent clashes. The Tunisian Government has imposed a nationwide curfew starting 22 January.

In Egypt, the authorities have searched more than 5000 homes, arrested several activists and shut down cultural spaces ahead of 25 January, the anniversary of the overthrow of former President Hosni Mubarak, according to different media outlets. On 25 January, protesters took to the street, defying the clampdown, in different places in Cairo. Two protesters were shot dead by security forces in an alleged exchange of gunfire, according to Aljazeera. Links: [The Guardian](#); [Time Aljazeera](#)

Flogging anniversary vigil held for Raif Badawi, petition handed over to Saudi Embassy in London

08/01/2016: A vigil for the release of Saudi blogger and 2015 Sakharov Prize laureate, Raif Badawi, was held in numerous cities around the world to mark the first anniversary of his flogging, upon a call by Amnesty International. The protesters who gathered before the Saudi Embassy in London managed to hand a petition of 250,000 signatures calling for Badawi's release to the Saudi authorities through Amnesty International Director Kate Allen. Ms Allen also handed over a separate petition calling for the release of Badawi's lawyer, Waleed Abu al-Khair. Links: [Amnesty UK](#); [IB Times](#)

Raif Badawi's sister arrested, released on bail hours later

12-13/01/2016: Samar Badawi, the sister of Saudi blogger and 2015 Sakharov Prize laureate, Raif Badawi, was arrested on charges of running her husband's twitter account and transferred to Dhahran Central Prison, where her husband, human rights lawyer Waleed Abu al-Khair, and her brother are both jailed, according to a tweet by Ensaf Haidar, Raif Badawi's wife. Ms Badawi was released on bail in the early hours of the next day, according to the Gulf Center for Human Rights. The same source stated that Ms Badawi had been summoned by the Criminal Investigation Authority in Jeddah for interrogation without specifying a reason, and was arrested immediately upon presenting herself to the Court. Link: [Gulf Council for Human Rights](#)

Denis Mukwege receives the Fondation pour l'égalité des chances en Afrique Prize in Brussels

13/01/2016: Sakharov Prize Laureate 2014 Dr Denis Mukwege, received the prize worth 100,000 Euros given by the Fondation pour l'égalité des chances en Afrique in the premises of the European Parliament on Monday 18 January. The prize aims to give recognition to Dr Mukwege's work with thousands of Congolese women victims of gang rape and brutal sexual violence. MEP **Louis Michel** praised Dr Mukwege as 'one of the pillars of History's good fortune'. On 15 January, Dr Mukwege's censored documentary 'L'homme qui répare les femmes' was finally authorised to be promoted within the Democratic Republic of Congo. Links: [MR](#); [Jeune Afrique RDC](#)

Guillermo Fariñas and Oswaldo Paya's daughter together as members of the Liaison Committee in Cuba

19/01/2016: Members of the executive board of the Liaison Committee of the Encuentro Nacional Cubano (Cuban National Meeting), **2010 Sakharov Laureate Guillermo Fariñas** and **Rosa Maria Payá, daughter of the 2002 Sakharov Laureate Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas**, joined a Committee meeting in Miami on 15-16 January. During the meeting they voiced their willingness to hold a Second Encuentro Nacional Cubano which aims to establish a wide-ranging democratic consultation inside and outside Cuba. Link: [Marti Noticias Cuba](#)

Reporters Without Borders condemned several arrests and mistreatment of journalists in Gaza Strip, Iran and Afghanistan

2005 Sakharov Prize Laureate, Reporters Without Borders condemned the mistreatment that some journalists are suffering in the Gaza Strip forcing them 'to censor themselves'. They also have recently condemned the increasing level of harassment to which journalists are being subjected in Iran. According to RWB's Press Freedom Index, Iran is considered as "one of the world's five biggest prisons for news and information providers". After the Tolo TV attack in Afghanistan and the growing threats that media organisations face in the country, Reporters Without Borders have called on the Afghan authorities to implement concrete measures to better protect journalists and to avoid impunity. On 15 January Reporters Without Borders launched a brand new video campaign regarding the situation of 'war reporters'. Links: [RWB Gaza Strip](#); [RWB Iran](#); [RWB Afghanistan](#); [RWB Video Campaign War Reporters](#); [RWB World Press Freedom Index](#)

EP URGENT RESOLUTIONS ON EU SEAMEN DETAINED IN INDIA, ETHIOPIA AND NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR TEST

21/01/2016: In its January plenary sitting, the EP called the [Indian authorities](#) to release the 14 Estonian and 6 UK crew members of the Merchant Vessel Seaman Guard Ohio that were detained and charged with illegal possession of weapons. On [Ethiopia](#), the EP condemned the growing number of human rights violations in the country and urged the authorities to guarantee the free flow of information and the protection of civil society, media and human rights activists' rights. The EP called on the international community to adopt significant and operational sanctions following the [nuclear test that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea](#) carried out on 6 January, 2016 which violated several UN Security Council Resolutions and threatened peace and stability. The EP also urged Korean authorities to abandon any further nuclear and ballistic practice.

Link: [EP Press Release Urgent Resolutions January 2016](#)

[Sakharov Prize Network website](#)