

SAKHAROV PRIZE NETWORK
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PARLIAMENT AND LAUREATES CELEBRATE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SAKHAROV PRIZE



05-06-18: The European Parliament hosted the conference of the 30th anniversary of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, which took place in Brussels on 4 and 5 June. Twenty Sakharov Prize Laureates and several Members of the European Parliament, including President **Antonio Tajani**, Vice Presidents **Heidi Hautala** and **Fabio Massimo Castaldo** paid tribute to the laureates'

achievements. The [press](#) also attended the conference.

EU Special Representative **Stavros Lambrinidis** and UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights **Kate Gilmore** introduced the first half of the conference which focussed on EU mechanisms and instruments to protect human rights defenders. Ms Gilmore underscored the importance of the Sakharov Prize, which “shines a light of celebration on human rights defenders, globally and locally”. On the second day, the Laureates shared their experiences, recommendations, and future projects with Members of the European Parliament.

Sakharov Laureates prevented from attending 30th anniversary of the Sakharov Prize

04-06-18: The president of the Cuban dissident organisation Ladies in White and 2005 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Berta Soler**, and Egyptian activist and 2011 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Asmaa Mahfouz**, were banned by their respective governments from traveling to Brussels in order to attend the 30th anniversary of the Sakharov Prize. These decisions come in the context of the ongoing crackdown on civil society in both countries. EP Vice-President **Heidi Hautala** and the Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights, **Pier Antonio Panzeri**, issued a strong statement [condemning](#) such decision.

Third Sakharov Fellowship brings human rights defenders to Brussels and Venice

04-06-18: After two successful editions, the EP **Sakharov Fellowship** has been renewed this year, **gathering in the European Parliament 12 committed human rights defenders** from Armenia, Bolivia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Jordan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mexico, Sudan, Thailand, Turkey, and Venezuela. They were selected among over 800 candidates. Their first week in Brussels focused on EU human rights policies and advocacy strategies and offered tailor-made networking opportunities including with MEPs. This year the fellows had an opportunity to meet the Sakharov Laureates in person, which created a unique occasion for intergenerational and intercontinental exchanges. A second week at **the European Inter-University Centre in Venice** with thematic clusters such as human rights defenders protection, business and human rights as well as women, peace and security. Sakharov Prize Laureates **Hauwa Ibrahim** and **Lamya Haji Bashar** gave lectures. [EP Sakharov Fellowship](#)

Nasrin Sotoudeh imprisoned

13-06-18: 2012 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Nasrin Sotoudeh** was arrested at her home and transferred to Evin prison. The news was announced by her husband **Reza Khandan** on social media. She had been condemned in absentia to a [five](#)-year sentence for ‘propaganda against the state’ and ‘assembly and collusion’. As a sign of protests, lawyers and activists including Ms **Sotoudeh**’s husband gathered outside the prison but were then detained by security agents. The Laureate is one of the most vocal and prominent [voices](#) of Iran who recently supported anti-hijab protesters, criticised the official list that excludes most of lawyers from politically charged cases, and called for a UN-held referendum on a new system of government in Iran.

President **Antonio Tajani** [reacted](#) swiftly to her imprisonment of with a clear message asking for Ms **Sotoudeh**’s immediate release. In a joint statement, the Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights, **Pier Antonio Panzeri**, and Vice-President **Heidi Hautala** said that Parliament “expects Iranian authorities to guarantee her full rights in line with international standards, including her physical, moral and psychological integrity and contacts with her family and lawyers.”

Venezuelan government releases dissidents, keeps Sakharov Laureate in prison

01-06-18: In a [purported](#) effort to reduce political tension, the Venezuelan government has released approximately fifty political prisoners including **Daniel Ceballos**, leader of the Venezuelan party Voluntad Popular (‘Popular Will’) and 2017 Sakharov Laureate. More than 300 Venezuelan dissidents and human rights activists are still kept in prison. **Lorent Saleh**, a leader of the Venezuelan student movement, human rights activist and 2017 Sakharov Prize Laureate, is still held incommunicado in the Helicoide prison in Caracas. After almost four years of detention, Mr. Saleh has yet to be judged. President **Antonio Tajani** [called](#) for his immediate release.

Belarusian Association of Journalists concerned about legislative amendments that further restrict the freedom of the media

19-06-18: Representatives of 2004 Sakharov Prize Laureate Belarusian Association of Journalists, **Andrei Bastunets** and **Zhanna Litvina**, were invited to the European Parliament to discuss the human rights and the media situation in Belarus. They shared their concerns regarding the latest developments in the country with the Members of the Sub-Committee on Human Rights, with the Chair of the Delegation with Belarus, **Bogdan Zdrojewski**, and with **Dirk Lorenz**, Deputy Head of Division Eastern partnership bilateral at the European External Action Service.

Memorial’s Oyub Titiev kept in prison

31-05-18: A Grozny court has extended until 9 July 2018 the detention of **Oyub Titiev**, the head of the Chechen office of 2009 Sakharov Laureate, the Russian organization Memorial. Mr Titiev has been held in prison since 9 January 2018.

Sakharov Laureates take part in the 2018 European Development Days

05-06-18: 2014 Sakharov Laureate **Denis Mukwege** and 2005 Sakharov Laureate **Hauwa Ibrahim** were part of two different panels of the 2018 edition of the [European Development Days](#), a forum for the development community organised by the European Commission in Brussels. This year’s edition tackled the situation of women in developing countries. **Hauwa Ibrahim** spoke in a [panel](#) discussion on the need to involve African women in foreign aid operations, while **Denis Mukwege** was part of a [debate](#) on gender-based violence in emergencies.

First World Forum - Normandy for Peace: two Laureates as key speakers

07-06-18: At the first edition of the World Forum - Normandy for [Peace](#) organized in Caen, France, 2016 Sakharov Laureate **Lamya Haji Bashar** spoke on terrorism and new forms of violence in the world while **Hauwa Ibrahim** contributed to a debate on how should international law reflect the new conflicts.

As World Cup kicks off, RSF denounces Kremlin's offense against free media

12-06-18: In the wake of the 2018 World Cup, 2005 Sakharov Laureate **Reporters Without Borders** (RSF) launched a new [campaign](#) denouncing the Russian government's overarching offensive against dissident journalists, and in particular the imprisonment of seven journalists. Russia is ranked 148 out of 180 countries in RSF's 2018 World Press Freedom Index. Its prisons are currently hosting more journalists than ever since the downfall of the Soviet Union. "The intense public interest aroused by the World Cup must not eclipse the unfair match between the government and independent media in Russia," RSF secretary-general **Christophe Deloire** said at a press conference.

2012 Laureate Jafar Panahi's film presented at Cannes Film Festival in his absence

13-06-18: 2012 Sakharov Laureate **Jafar Panahi** has released his last [movie](#) "Three [faces](#)". Facing an exit ban, Mr Panahi could not attend the film festival to present his film.

1999 Laureate Xanana Gusmao becomes adviser to the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste

20-06-18: After the recent elections held in the country, **Taur Matan Ruaj** becomes the new prime minister of Timor-Leste, while 1999 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Xanana Gusmao** is his [adviser](#).

EP RESOLUTIONS ON ROHINGYA REFUGEES, RUSSIAN DISSIDENTS, AND NABEEL RAJAB (BAHRAIN)

14-06-18: The Parliament [condemned](#) the ongoing attacks against the Rohingya people in Myanmar, and called on all EU institutions to take appropriate measures in order to pressure Myanmar into human rights compliance. Secondly, it [demanded](#) the release of all Russian political opponents and civil society actors currently detained, including **Oyub Titiev**, Director of the Chechen office of 2009 Sakharov Prize Laureate Memorial. In third place, it called on the Bahrain government to immediately and unconditionally release **Nabeel Rajab**, a human rights activist held in prison since June 2016.

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