

# SAKHAROV PRIZE NETWORK NEWSLETTER 06/2016

## FIRST COHORT OF SAKHAROV FELLOWS ACCOMPLISH THEIR PROGRAMME IN BRUSSELS AND VENICE

19-06 – 02-07-2016: Under the first edition of the Sakharov Fellowship 13 strongly committed young human rights defenders attended training at the European Parliament in Brussels and the European Inter-University Centre (EIUC) in Venice. They came from Albania, Belarus, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guatemala, Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Nigeria, Russia, Trinidad & Tobago, Uganda and Ukraine. The fellows were selected from over 150 candidates, many of them upon recommendations by Sakharov Prize Laureates and the EU Delegations around the globe.

Their programme in Brussels focused on the EU's policies and tools in support of human rights defenders, accessing funding for human rights defenders, and developing communication skills. The Fellows had meetings with **EP Vice-President Ulrike Lunacek**, and MEPs **Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea**, Vice-Chair of the Human Rights Sub-Committee, and **Ana Gomes**, Member of the Security and Defence Sub-Committee. They also attended a plenary session of the Parliament. In one week at the EIUC in Venice dedicated to international human rights law and instruments they had lectures by international human rights experts including **Sakharov Prize Laureate 2005 Hauwa Ibrahim** and **Sakharov Prize Nominee 2014 Leyla Yunus**.

The idea for the Sakharov Fellowship was born at the 25th Anniversary Conference of the Sakharov Prize. The Fellowship will take place once a year and aims to help building a network of "next



generation" human rights defenders in the spirit of the Sakharov Prize. The European Parliament, the EU Delegations and the Sakharov Prize Laureates are committed to support them in their work and will strive to identify opportunities for joint actions.

As an immediate follow-up to the Fellowship, two Fellows – **Andrea Ixchiú** from Guatemala and **Nicholas Opiyo** from Uganda – have recorded video messages for an upcoming hearing of the EP's Human Rights Sub-Committee on the shrinking space for civil society.

### **Raif Badawi on a third hunger strike as he completes his fourth year in prison**

10-06-2016: **2015 Sakharov Prize Laureate Raif Badawi**, who has very limited means of communicating with his family, went on a third hunger strike on 10 June over the refusal of the Saudi authorities to give him medical treatment. According to information received from Raif's wife Ensaf Haidar he was finally hospitalised after two days. At the occasion of the fourth anniversary of Raif's imprisonment on 17 June **EP Vice-President Ulrike Lunacek** called again for his immediate release. "Because blogging is not a crime" she wrote on Twitter. Link: [RBF](#)

### **Taslima Nasreen faces death threats from extremist Islamic groups**

30-06-2016: **Sakharov Prize Laureate 1994 Taslima Nasreen** has again received death threats from extremist Islamic groups. The death threats follow a spate of killings in her native Bangladesh carried out by Islamic extremists. Link: [Twitter](#)

### **Reporters Without Borders Turkey representative detained for ten days**

30-06-2016: **Erol Önderoglu**, the Turkey representative of **Sakharov Prize Laureate 2005 Reporters Without Borders (RSF)**, was held for ten days in pre-trial detention by Turkish authorities. Mr Önderoglu found himself placed in pre-trial detention in a country that is ranked 151st out of 180 countries in RSF's 2016 World Press Freedom Index. RSF co-ordinated a global action calling for his release which **EP President Martin Schulz** participated in. Link: [RSF](#)

### **Hauwa Ibrahim speaks at Fundamental Rights Forum, Vienna**

08-06-2016: **Sakharov Prize Laureate 2005 Hauwa Ibrahim** represented the Sakharov Prize Network at the Fundamental Rights Forum of the EU's fundamental Rights Agency in Vienna. She discussed human rights in an increasingly interconnected world, noting that we need to "globalise the local and localise the global", and talked of the importance of education and the media in fighting extremism. **EU Special Representative for Human Rights Stavros Lambrinidis** also spoke, where he noted that the EU is ensuring human rights concerns are "hardwired into development aid". Link: [FRA](#)

### **Guillermo Fariñas meets UN experts in Geneva**

06-06-2016: **Sakharov Prize Laureate 2010 Guillermo Fariñas** joined three other Cuban activists at a meeting in Geneva with experts in the fight against arbitrary detention, torture and freedom of expression. They also met Cuban exile communities from France, Germany and the USA. This was an unprecedented meeting for Cuban activists, and Fariñas highlighted that it is important for Cuban activists that their work inside Cuba is complemented by pressure from external governments in favour of democracy and human rights on the island. Link: [Cubanet](#)

### **Nurit Peled calls for solidarity with pro-Palestine boycott movement**

08-06-2016: **Sakharov Laureate 2001 Nurit Peled-Elhanen** added her name to a letter in support of the campaign of boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) called for by Palestinian civil society, and its co-founder Omar Barghouti. Civil society has called for BDS against Israel until it complies with international law and Palestinian rights. Peled and the other signatories called for governments, parliaments and the EU Institutions "to use all their available means of diplomacy and power to compel the Israeli government to immediately halt its intimidation campaign against Omar Barghouti and the Palestinian-led BDS Movement". Link: [IMEMC](#)

### **EP AGREES RESOLUTIONS ON DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO AT ITS BRUSSELS "MINI-PLENARY" AND AT THE ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**

23-06-2016: At the June Brussels "Mini-Plenary" sitting the Parliament urge all parties fighting in north-eastern Congo to put an "end to the violence, lay down their arms, release all children from their ranks and promote dialogue" in a resolution on the [Democratic Republic of Congo](#). This followed a [Resolution](#) unanimously approved by MEPs and MPs from the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP)

countries at the 31st ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly condemning all acts of political violence and calling for a "successful and timely holding of elections, which will be crucial to the long-term stability and development of the country and the entire region". Link: [EP](#)

**EP URGENCY RESOLUTIONS ON THE OPPOSITION IN CAMBODIA, PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE IN TAJIKISTAN, AND CONTINUING VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN VIETNAM**

09-06-2016: In its June Plenary sitting the Parliament condemned the worsening climate for opposition politicians and human rights activists in [Cambodia](#), called on [Tajikistan](#) to allow opposition groups, lawyers and journalists to operate freely, and urged [Vietnam](#) to put an immediate end to all harassment, intimidation, and persecution of human rights defenders. Link: [EP Press Release Urgency Resolutions June 2016](#)