

**SAKHAROV PRIZE NETWORK  
NEWSLETTER  
04/2016**

**SALIH OSMAN'S PASSPORT CONFISCATED**

14-04-2016: Four Sudanese human rights activists, including **2007 Sakharov Prize Laureate Salih Osman**, had their passports confiscated by Sudanese security services as they attempted to travel to Geneva to meet UN officials. The intended meeting came ahead of a UN-led review into the human rights situation in Sudan. The European Parliament monitored closely the situation, however Sudanese security officials returned his passport only in mid-April, not in time for Mr Osman to get a visa to attend planned Sakharov Prize Network events in Brussels in April. The Laureate will be invited now to the Sakharov Prize Mid-Term Conference on the 23-24 May in Brussels. Link: [GlobalPost/AFP](#)

**Taslima Nasreen discusses radicalisation at Sakharov Prize Network event**

20-04-2016: **Sakharov Laureate 1994 Taslima Nasreen** joined **ECR Group Chair Syed Kamall MEP** and others at a discussion on preventing radicalisation and the film *My Jihad* at the European Parliament in Brussels, at an event opened by **Vice-President Ulrike Lunacek MEP**. The debates and screenings at the European Parliament were organised in the partnership with the Czech NGO People in Need in the framework of the **One World Film Festival**, the biggest festival in Europe dedicated to human rights. Taslima Nasreen noted that free thinkers that criticise Islam in Islamic countries "either are imprisoned, forced to leave their country or get killed". She deplored the ongoing radicalisation of the Bangladeshi society and Saudi Arabia's influence. While in Brussels she also joined a debate in Parliament on women refugees and asylum seekers and the EU. Links: [EP](#), [EPIO](#); [EPP](#)

**Raif Badawi honoured with the Prix Voltaire**

10-04-2016: While in prison for four years by now, **2015 Sakharov Prize Laureate Raif Badawi**'s case garners increasing international recognition. The International Publishers Association awarded Badawi its Prix Voltaire, a prize formerly known as the IPA Freedom to Publish Prize. Mr Badawi's wife Ensaf Haidar received the price in her husband's name in London. Link: [Guardian](#)

**Leyla Yunus granted permission to leave Azerbaijan**

19-04-2016: **Sakharov Finalist 2014 Leyla Yunus** and her husband Arif have been allowed to leave Azerbaijan to seek medical treatment in the Netherlands, where they have been granted asylum. Their case was followed closely by the European Parliament, with **Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Elmar Brok MEP** noting that it "is a very important and a compassionate step, as the health of the Leyla and Arif Yunus has been a matter of concern to us over the last year", and Parliament's **Vice-President responsible for the Sakharov Prize Network Ulrike Lunacek MEP** welcoming the move and urging the Azeri authorities to release the remaining political prisoners in Azerbaijan, notably Khadija Ismayilova. Links: [AFET](#), [Greens](#)

**Hu Jia criticises Twitter for its relationship with the Chinese Government**

22-04-2016: Twitter has been criticised for appointing a new MD for Greater China with links to the Chinese Government. In an article also highlighting other social networks' increasingly warm relations with China, **Sakharov Laureate 2008 Hu Jia** said that Twitter "is a place where we can reveal the truth and which helps us to communicate and cooperate... it isn't just betraying us, but it is also betraying itself and betraying its moral responsibility to a free society". Link: [Independent](#)

### **Nelson Mandela Foundation seeks meeting with ANC leadership**

09-04-2016: The foundation of **1988 Sakharov Prize Laureate Nelson Mandela** demanded a meeting with South Africa's ruling ANC party after President Jacob Zuma was found guilty of violating the constitution after failing to repay taxpayers' money spent on his private home. The Nelson Mandela Foundation argued that South Africa has deep-rooted systemic problems and that it needs "good, accountable leadership" not only in Parliament and all tiers of government and the civil service but throughout other institutions like businesses, universities, NGOs and political parties. Links: [News24](#), [Bloomberg](#)

### **Hauwa Ibrahim highlights danger of terrorist groups recruiting girls as suicide bombers**

08-04-2016: Following a report in the *New York Times* on the increasing prevalence of girls, including captives, being made to carry out suicide bombings by terrorist groups in Nigeria, Cameroon and other countries, **Sakharov Prize Laureate 2005 Hauwa Ibrahim** described the problem in an article for *Teen Vogue*. She called on the world to take notice of this increasing tendency, and cited a combination of poverty, political corruption, high unemployment, and a very low literacy rate in Nigeria as creating the conditions for terrorist groups to thrive. April also marked the second anniversary of the kidnapping of the Chibok schoolgirls in Nigeria. Links: [TV](#), [NYT](#)

### **Myanmar court frees student activists**

08-04-2016: Myanmar has released dozens of student activists from prison, a day after **Sakharov Laureate 1990 Aung San Suu Kyi** announced she would release all political prisoners. Aung San Suu Kyi's party recently came to power following elections in Myanmar. There are still an estimated 400 political prisoners in Myanmar, with Ms Suu Kyi saying their release has been delayed by the legal process needed. Link: [BBC](#)

### **EP URGENCY RESOLUTIONS ON PAKISTAN, IN PARTICULAR THE ATTACK IN LAHORE; HONDURAS AND THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS; AND NIGERIA**

14-04-2016: In its April plenary sitting, the EP condemned the attacks in Pakistan, the worsening situation for human rights defenders in Honduras, and condemned terrorist attacks in Nigeria.

MEPs expressed shock at the 27 March attack in [Pakistan](#) and called for the attackers to be brought to justice, while expressing concern at Pakistan's lack of space for freedom of religion and belief and Pakistan's blasphemy laws. On [Honduras](#), MEPs condemned recent assassinations of human rights defenders and paid tribute to murdered activist Berta Cáceres. MEPs called for an immediate investigation and for the perpetrators to be brought to justice. MEPs also marked the second anniversary of the kidnapping of the Chibok schoolgirls in [Nigeria](#) while welcoming the peaceful transition of power to President Buhari and the high expectations generated by his government's ambitious reform programme. Link: [EP Press Release Urgency Resolutions April 2016](#)

### **SAKHAROV PRIZE NETWORK EVENTS IN MAY**

During May, the Sakharov Prize Network will host the following events:

#### **8 May (Strasbourg) and 28 May (Brussels), European Parliament Open Doors Days**

Ali Ferzat will speak on diversity and carry out a book signing at the Parliament's annual open days.

#### **20-21 May, European Youth Event, Strasbourg**

Ensaf Haidar and Denis Mukwege will share their experiences at this event for youth activists from around the world. Dr Mukwege will also speak on the theme of the EU's role in the world.

#### **23-24 May, Mid-Term Conference of the Sakharov Prize Network, Brussels**

A group of Laureates will attend the Parliament to mark the midway point between the Network's 25th and 30th anniversaries, where they will discuss diplomatic approaches to defending human rights defenders, religious and ethnic diversity, and the defence of human rights in a digital era.