



### **Raif Badawi is the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought's newest laureate**

29/10/2015 the **Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought for 2015 has been awarded to Saudi blogger Raif Badawi**. EP President Schulz called Badawi 'a hero in our modern internet world who is fighting for democracy and facing real torture' as he announced the decision taken by the Conference of Presidents. 'I have asked the King of Saudi Arabia to pardon Badawi and release him to give him the chance to receive the Sakharov Prize here in the European Parliament', the EP President and Sakharov Prize Network co-chair said.

Badawi was shortlisted as a finalist for the Prize together with the Democratic Opposition in Venezuela and murdered Russian opposition politician and activist Boris Nemtsov by a vote of the Foreign Affairs and Development Committees. The initial list of nominees included also Edna Adan Ismail, Nadiya Savchenko, and Edward Snowden, Antoine Deltour and Stéphanie Gibaud.

Link: [President Schulz press point](#)

### **Flogging of Raif Badawi to resume, wife warns**

27/10/2015: Ensaf Haidair, **the wife of Saudi blogger, 2015 SP laureate, Raif Badawi**, said she has been informed that the Saudi authorities have given the green light to the resumption of her husband's flogging.

In a statement published on the Raif Badawi Foundation website, Haidar said that she received her information from the same source who had warned her about Badawi's pending flogging at the beginning of January 2015, a few days before Badawi was flogged.

Link: [Fondation Raif Badawi](#)

### **Xanana Gusmao and DEVE Delegation at Milan EXPO on Feeding the Planet**

15/10/2015: **1999 Sakharov Prize laureate and first President of Timor-Leste, Xanana Gusmão**, and a delegation of the EP's DEVE Committee led by Chairwoman and SPN Member **Linda McAvan** tackled the right to food, land rights and the use of research for the effective realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals during an intensive two day-programme in Milan. Gusmão called for a reform of the international system that is too wasteful and often makes mistakes and impositions in its approach to the least developed countries. Humanitarian aid, he said, is too expensive and only demonstrates an ability to react, not an ability to eradicate hunger. He emphasised peace and stability as necessary preconditions to ensure generations can earn their own livelihood.

Link: [European Parliament](#) [European Parliament- Italian](#) [Paese Italia Press](#) [SPN news](#)

### **Ali Ferzat debates free speech in Sakharov lectures in The Netherlands**

22-23/10/2015: in two public Sakharov debates in The Hague and Amsterdam **Ali Ferzat, Sakharov Prize Laureate 2011**, tackled freedom of speech in the Middle East and the war in Syria in public debates with Dutch MEPs Katri Piri and Marietje Schaake. Ferzat said Syrian President Assad had deliberately freed religious fanatics when the Arab Spring started, in order to create chaos and force the rest of the world to choose between the regime and IS. Ferzat also led a cartoon workshop for students whilst in The Netherlands.

Link: [Ali Ferzat at The Hague](#)

### **DRC Government lifts ban on film on Dr Mukwege**

19/10/2015: the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo has lifted the ban it had imposed on a documentary featuring **2014 Sakharov Prize laureate, Denis Mukwege**, saying, in an official statement, that it recognised the utility of the film to aid the efforts of the DRC and the international community against the 'inacceptable' violence suffered by Congolese women.

Link: [Jeune Afrique](#)

### **Leyla Zana calls for peace in Turkey at European Parliament in Strasbourg**

07/10/2015: **1995 Sakharov Prize Laureate Leyla Zana** advocated for dialogue as the solution to prevent Turkey from becoming "a second Syria" with Turkish-Kurdish clashes breaking a three-year ceasefire. In an event on the sidelines of Parliament's plenary session with Zana, MEPs **Rebecca Harms, Gabriele Zimmer** and **Richard Howitt** agreed on a common responsibility to help restore peace through a democratic and non-violent process. **EP President Martin Schulz supported Zana's call, tweeting 'Met Leyla #Zana, #Sakharov prize winner '95. Support her call to stop violence in #Turkey & to resume peace process'**. Zana also warned of possible lack of fairness in the Turkish elections scheduled for November.

Link: [Video Press Conference- EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT; EP President](#)

### **BAJ characterizes Belarusian election result as inevitable in a low-key electoral campaign**

**22/10/2015**: the October presidential election in Belarus was a 'quiet' affair with a 'predetermined' conclusion the **Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ), Sakharov Laureate 2004** said, as incumbent President Alyaksandr Lukashenka swept to a fifth presidential victory, with 83.42% of votes. BAJ's media monitoring head Ales Antsipenka told journalists in Minsk that Lukashenka dominated the state media coverage of an electoral campaign that marginalised opposition forces 'giving them less than one percent of the airtime devoted to the election'. Non-state media covered the opposition, but given their limited viewership and the 'atmosphere of inevitability' their impact was limited, BAJ said.

Link: [BAJ press conference](#)

### **Madres de Plaza de Mayo founding member dies and 117th found grandchild goes public**

15-16/10/2015: Aurora Zucco de Bellocchio, one of the founding members of Argentina's **Madres de Plaza de Mayo, Sakharov Laureate 1992**, passed away on 15 October, aged 93.

Two Madres, María Assof de Domínguez, President of Madres de la Plaza de Mayo in Mendoza, and Madre Angelina Catterino presented publicly the 117th missing grandchild found. The granddaughter, identified only as Claudia, was identified and reunited with her grandmothers earlier this year, but wished to give her own children time to adjust to the news before going public.

Links: [Minuto Uno](#); [La Nacion](#)

### **Hu Jia and Reporters Without Borders call on the Chinese authorities to free Liu Xiaobo's wife**

12/10/2015: Chinese **Sakharov Laureate 2008 Hu Jia** and **Sakharov Laureates 2005 Reporters Without Borders** urged the immediate release of Liu Xia, wife of jailed Chinese Nobel Peace Prize Liu Xiaobo, who has been under house arrest since 2010. Hu Jia denounced the isolation and silencing of Liu Xia by the Chinese authorities as the 'worst persecution'. RWB called on the international community and on the winners of the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize, the Tunisian Quartet, to push for Liu Xiaobo's release with the Chinese government.

Link: [Reporters without Borders](#); [Radio Free Asia](#)

### **Aung San Suu Kyi intends to lead government if NLD wins November elections in Myanmar/Burma**

08/10/2015: **Aung San Suu Kyi, 1990 Sakharov Prize Laureate**, stated in a recent interview that she intends to lead the country if her National League for Democracy party wins the elections. 'If the NLD wins the elections and we form a government, I'm going to be the leader of that government

whether or not I'm the president,' she told India Today TV. The current constitution prohibits those married to foreign nationals or whose children have foreign citizenship from becoming president of the country.

Link: [Telegraph UK](#); [Bni Online](#)

**EP URGENCY RESOLUTIONS on the imminent execution of Ali-Mohammed al-Nimr, the mass displacement of children caused by Boko Haram attacks, the violence in CAR and human rights violations in Thailand**

08/10/2015: in its first October plenary sitting, the [EP called on the Saudi authorities](#) to stop the beheading and crucifixion of 21-year old **Ali Mohammed al-Nimr** and for a moratorium on the use of capital punishment in **Saudi Arabia**.

[In a resolution on Nigeria](#), the EP drew attention to the **mass displacement of children as a result of Boko Haram Attacks** and strongly condemned Boko Haram's crimes. In a [resolution on Central African Republic \(CAR\)](#), the EP expressed **concern over a possible civil war** if the latest outbreak of violence is not contained and call for the respect of the rule of law. In a [resolution on Thailand](#) the EP voiced deep concern on the '**deteriorating human rights situation** in Thailand following the illegal coup of May 2014' especially regarding ' the right to liberty and the peaceful exercise of other human rights, in particular those relevant to peaceful involvement in political activities'.