

SAKHAROV PRIZE NETWORK NEWSLETTER 10/2016

SAKHAROV PRIZE 2016 AWARDED TO NADIA MURAD AND LAMIYA AJI BASHAR

27-10-2016: **The Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament** has selected **Nadia Murad and Lamiya Aji Bashar** of Iraq for the 2016 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. Survivors of sexual enslavement by Islamic State, Ms Murad and Ms Aji Bashar were recognised by the European Parliament for their powerful work as public advocates for women afflicted by Islamic State's campaign of sexual violence and for the Yazidi community in Iraq, which has faced a genocidal campaign by Islamic State militants. **European Parliament President Martin Schulz** said the Parliament is "demonstrating their fight has not been in vain and that we are prepared to step up to the plate to help them".

The two other shortlisted nominees were **Can Dündar** and the defenders of freedom of thought and expression in Turkey and **Mustafa Dzhemilev** of Ukraine. The Conference of Presidents also decided to invite Mr Dündar and Mr Dzhemilev to attend the Sakharov Prize 2016 ceremony, which will be held in the Strasbourg Plenary week from 12 - 15 December. Links: [SPN](#); [EP](#); [Murad](#); [Twitter](#); [BBC](#)

Saudi Arabia could restart flogging of Raif Badawi

19-10-2016: According to the **Raif Badawi Foundation** Saudi Arabia could restart the sentence of 1000 lashes against the **Sakharov Prize Laureate 2015**, who is still in prison. The European Parliament mobilised against the possible resumption of the punishment. **President Martin Schulz** tweeted that he is shocked and qualified the punishment as inhuman and undue. More information is available on Twitter using the hashtag #FreeRaif. Speaking on behalf of the **Human Rights Subcommittee (DROI)**, **Chair Elena Valenciano MEP** noted that "Raif Badawi is facing a catalogue of harsh punishments simply for writing about his beliefs" and called for Saudi Arabia "to release Badawi from prison and reunite him with his family". Badawi, a liberal, secular blogger, is serving a ten year prison sentence and was condemned to receive 1000 lashes after being convicted for establishing a forum hosting "blasphemous" commentary and online posts. After he received the first 50 lashes of his sentence in public in January 2015, the punishment was suspended for medical reasons. Links: [DROI](#); [Guardian](#)

Fariñas addresses EP committees asking for stronger human rights oversight mechanisms

12-10-2016: **2010 Sakharov Prize Laureate Guillermo Fariñas** led a six-strong delegation to the European Parliament to address a joint Foreign Affairs Committee (AFET) and Human Rights Subcommittee exchange of views on EU-Cuba relations chaired by **Christian Dan Preda MEP**. During the three day visit the delegation met 13 MEPs from the AFET and International Trade (INTA) Committees and DROI Subcommittee. The delegation shared their perspectives on the EU-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (PDCA), which the European Parliament will start reviewing later this year. Mr Fariñas emphasised the need to include stronger human rights content such as milestones for progress by Cuba and strong oversight mechanisms, and objected to the EU's lack of engagement with Cuban civil society in the process of negotiating the PDCA. At the exchange of views an official statement by **Sakharov Prize Laureate 2005 Damas de Blanco** was also read.

Links: [Videolink](#); [EurActiv](#); [Diario](#); [Diario](#); [ALDE](#)

Memorial registered as foreign agent

04-10-2016: Russia's Ministry of Justice issued a statement on 4 October 2016, adding **Sakharov Prize Laureate 2009 Memorial** to a registry of non-commercial organisations functioning as "foreign agents".

Memorial's work since 1989 in monitoring and documenting human rights violations in the republics of the former Soviet Union is internationally recognised. Chair of the European Parliament's DROI Subcommittee **Elena Valenciano MEP** denounced this decision as discriminatory and stigmatizing and called on the Russian authorities to repeal the 2012 law. Links: [DROI](#)

Belarussian opposition in the EP: election far short of international standards

13-10-2016: **Sakharov Prize Laureate 2006 Aliaksandr Milinkevich** and seven other Belarussian opposition leaders participated on 13 October in a meeting of the European Parliament Delegation for relations with Belarus and the respective Euronest working group. They discussed the situation in the country after parliamentary elections were held in Belarus on 11 September 2016. Officials of the **Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe**, which observed the electoral process, reported on their findings. For the first time in years, one representative of the opposition and one independent member were elected to parliament, signaling progress. However, Mr Milinkevich and the other opposition leaders stressed that the elections continue to fall far short of international standards.

Denis Mukwege calls for better regulation on the trade of conflict minerals

13-10-2016: **Sakharov Prize Laureate 2014 Dr Denis Mukwege** attended a discussion on the implication of trade in conflict minerals at the EP Information Office in Stockholm on 13 October. He also represented the Sakharov Prize Network at the Södertörn University Peace Conference on October 14. At the EP Information Office, the founder of the Panzi Hospital spoke about the importance of EU regulation on the trade in conflict minerals and the causes of the horrific sexual violence committed against women in eastern Congo. He argued that, as Europe is one of the major destinations for products such as mobile phones and computers that contain conflict minerals, it can take the lead in breaking the cycle of violence caused by the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, noting that "our daily appliances are very closely linked to the war that has caused five million casualties, ten million internal refugees and hundreds of thousands of victims of sexual violence."

Sakharov Prize Laureate 2016 Nadia Murad awarded Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize

10-10-2016: The Council of Europe has awarded its Vaclav Havel human rights prize, worth €60,000, to **Sakharov Prize Laureate 2016 Nadia Murad**. In her acceptance speech she called for the creation of an international court to judge crimes committed by Islamic State jihadists, noting that "The free world is not reacting". Link: [Guardian](#)

Sakharov Prize nominee Ilham Tohti is 2016 Martin Ennals Laureate for Human Rights Defenders

11-10-2016: **Sakharov Prize Nominee 2016 Ilham Tohti**, an Uyghur intellectual who has worked for two decades to foster dialogue and understanding between Uyghurs and Han Chinese, has been awarded the 2016 Martin Ennals Award. The Award recognises human rights defenders who have shown deep commitment and face great personal risk. Mr Tohti has been subjected to official surveillance, arbitrarily arrested and prevented from leaving China. In 2014 he was arrested on charges of separatism and sentenced to life imprisonment, after a two-day trial. Link: [ENNALS](#)

EP URGENCY RESOLUTIONS ON RWANDA, SUDAN AND WORKER'S RIGHTS DEFENDER ANDY HALL IN THAILAND

06-10-2016: In its October Plenary sitting the Parliament condemned intimidation, arrest, detention and prosecution of opposition party leaders, members and activists in [Rwanda](#), the indiscriminate bombing of civilians and human rights breaches in [Sudan](#), and the guilty verdict against worker's rights defender [Andy Hall in Thailand](#). Link: [EP Press Release Urgency Resolutions October 2016](#)