

SAKHAROV PRIZE NETWORK
NEWSLETTER
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SAKHAROV FELLOWSHIP BRINGS HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS TO BRUSSELS

06-06-17: After a successful first edition in 2016, the EP **Sakharov Fellowship** has been renewed this year, **gathering in the European Parliament 14 committed human rights defenders** from as many different countries (Bosnia & Herzegovina, Cambodia, China, Costa Rica, Egypt, Ethiopia, Georgia, Iraq, Pakistan, Peru, Russia, Tunisia, Turkey, Zambia). They were selected among over 1100 candidates. The first week of the training included tailor-made programmes with bilateral meeting with MEPs and focused on EU human rights policies and advocacy strategies. The fellows contributed to the [FEMM](#), [DROI](#) meetings chaired by MEPs **Blinkevičiūtė** and **Panzeri** and took part in discussion with [COHOM](#). They benefited also from networking opportunities with representatives of EU Institutions. The second part of the training, at **the European Inter-University Center in Venice**, is dedicated to topics such as human rights defenders protection, business and human rights and sexual violence in conflict. The Sakharov Prize Laureates **Lamya Haji Bashar** and **Hauwa Ibrahim** will give lectures. [EP Sakharov Fellowship](#)

Dr Mukwege anew protected by UN forces in the DRC

16-05-17: In mid-May UN forces restored full-time protection of Panzi hospital where **Dr Mukwege**, 2014 Sakharov Prize Laureate, works. Protection had been removed in 2015 and Dr Mukwege had been reiterating his calls for re-establishing protection since then, in particular after the assassination of his close colleague **Dr Gildo Byamungu Magaju** in April 2017. His call received strong support by the European Parliament, in particular by **EP President Tajani**, Belgian MPs, French officials and petitions gathering thousands of signatures. [MONUSCO's press release](#)

UN Special Rapporteur visiting Saudi Arabia denied authorisation to meet Raif Badawi

04-05-17: **Ben Emmerson, UN Special Rapporteur** on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, was invited by Saudi Arabia's government to assess the country's action to fight terrorism. Emmerson was denied access to jailed activists, including 2015 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Raif Badawi**. Badawi has now served half of his 10 year-prison term. [AP news](#)

Reporters Without Borders' Director in Parliament for the World Press Freedom Day

04-05-17: **Christophe Deloire**, Director of the 2005 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Reporters Without Borders (RSF)**, addressed the **DROI Subcommittee** on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day. He warned that freedom of the press and expression were acutely threatened, with democracies evolving dramatically towards press repression, as Turkey, the US, Poland. Mr Deloire stressed the European Parliament had an important role to play to promote the freedom of the press. **EP President Tajani**, who met with Mr Deloire on the same day, stressed in a [tweet](#) that "defending media freedom is defending democracy".

RSF joins Wei Jingsheng in condemning Chinese leadership of Interpol

07-04-17: **Reporters Without Borders** shares the concern of 1996 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Wei Jingsheng** over the election of **Meng Hongwei**, Minister of Public Security in China and in charge of the secret police for the Chinese Communist regime, as head of INTERPOL. The NGO notably fears that "China could use this position to monitor or even obstruct the movements of journalists, bloggers and other human rights defenders." [RSF Press release](#)

Mogherini supports a UN Fact Finding mission in Myanmar

02-05-17: **1990 Sakharov Prize Laureate and First State Counsellor of Myanmar Aung San Suu Kyi** visited Brussels on May 2. At a joint press conference, EU High Representative/Vice-President **Federica Mogherini** spoke in favour of a UN Fact Finding mission in Myanmar to investigate on the persecution of the Rohingya minority. "The decision by the [UN] Human Rights Council to dispatch an independent international fact finding mission is probably one of the very few issues of disagreement between us"- said Mogherini. Both politicians discussed political and reconciliation process, humanitarian support and perspectives in the change of the constitution. [Remarks of Federica Mogherini](#)

Over 50 Damas de Blanco arrested and detained on a Sunday protest

07-05-17: Around 100 demonstrators from Cuban civil society groups, including dozens of 2005 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Damas de Blanco** and their leader **Berta Soler**, were arrested and prevented from participating in peaceful protests around Cuba on Sunday 7 May. Only in the capital, at least 23 Damas de Blanco were detained. On Monday morning, around 50 Damas de Blanco were still in detention in various locations around the country. [Cubanet](#), [Diario Las Americas](#)

Nadia Murad meets the Pope to ally against human trafficking

03-05-17: 2016 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Nadia Murad** met **Pope Francis**. Vatican Radio commented that Ms Murad, who is UN's first Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking sees herself as an ally of the Pope in the struggle against human trafficking. In her speech at the Crime Commission meeting on 22 May Nadia Murad expressed also her relief at the news of release of the **Nigerian Chibok girls** from Boko Haram captivity, but she stressed that she remains concerned about the fate of the girls who remain in the captivity of Boko Haram. "Trafficking aims to dehumanise the victims, to separate them from their own culture and community, to reduce them to objects to be commercialised" said Murad. [Catholic Culture](#), [UNODC](#)

Azerbaijani Court orders Leyla and Arif Yunus to return to Azerbaijan for judgment

17-05-17: Human rights defender 2014 Sakharov Prize finalist **Leyla Yunus** and her husband Arif were summoned by an Azerbaijani Court to attend a hearing in Baku on May 31. They had been allowed to leave Azerbaijan in 2016 on health grounds. Their request to participate in the hearing via video link was rejected by the Court. Co-rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe have voiced concern over this court order, as Leyla and **Arif Yunus** are still in need of medical treatment in the Netherlands. Links: [Radio Free Europe](#), [PACE press release](#)

EP URGENCY RESOLUTIONS ON H. HICHILEMA IN ZAMBIA, DR GUDINA IN ETHIOPIA AND SOUTH SUDAN

18-05-17: In three resolutions adopted during its May plenary session, the European Parliament voiced concern on the case of opposition party leader **Hakainde Hichilema**, arrested over political motives in [Zambia](#). The EP also called for the release of Dr **Merera Gudina**, leader of the opposition party in [Ethiopia](#), arrested in November 2016. Furthermore, MEPs demanded more humanitarian aid for [South Sudan](#) and called for a ceasefire. Link: [EP Press release](#)