

SAKHAROV PRIZE NETWORK NEWSLETTER No. 7/2018

OLEG SENTSOV WINS SAKHAROV PRIZE 2018

25-10-18: The European Parliament decided today to award the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought for 2018 to **Oleg Sentsov**. He was nominated by the Group of the European People's Party. Sentsov is an Ukrainian film Director who was detained on 10 May 2014 in Crimea and convicted to 20 years of imprisonment on charges of plotting terrorist acts against Russia "de facto" rule in Crimea. The two other finalists for the Sakharov Prize this year were eleven **NGOs protecting human rights and saving lives of migrants across the Mediterranean Sea** and **Nasser Zefzafi**, leader of the Hirak movement in the Moroccan Rif region.

The 11 NGOs are **Boat Refugee Foundation, Jugend Rettet, Lifeline Rescue Boat, Médecins Sans Frontières international, MOAS, Proactiva Open Arms, PROEM-AID, Save the Children, Sea Eye, Sea-Watch, and SOS Méditerranée**. Since 2015, workers and volunteers of these NGOs have been saving lives of migrants crossing the Mediterranean, while sometimes risking their own.

Nasser Zefzafi leads Hirak, a social movement in the Moroccan Rif region. The Moroccan authorities have reacted to it by imprisoning more than 2,000 people, including Zefzafi. He was condemned in June 2018 to 20 years in prison.

The European Parliament will invite representatives of the laureate and of the finalists to attend the 2018 Sakharov Prize ceremony, which will be held in Strasbourg on 12 December. Link: [EP](#)

Nadia Murad and Denis Mukwege receive 2018 Nobel Peace Prize

05-10-18: **Sakharov Prize Laureates Nadia Murad (2016) and Denis Mukwege (2014)** were honoured "for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict". Dr Mukwege has helped ten thousands of victims of sexual violence in Congo. He has become the most prominent advocate for raising international awareness on the plight of these women. Since Nadia Murad survived sexual slavery inflicted by the Islamic State to her Yazidi community, she has been fighting against impunity to promote justice for the victims of sexual violence in Iraq and worldwide. In his [statement](#), **President Tajani** praised the courage and resilience of both Nobel Prize winners in "their fight for common human values".

2017 Sakharov Prize Laureate Lorent Saleh released from prison

14-10-18: **Lorent Saleh** was released and expelled to Spain where he arrived on 13 October. He spent more than four years imprisoned under inhumane conditions in the headquarters of the Venezuelan Intelligence Service (SEBIN). The former student leader was received at Madrid airport by the Vice-Chair of the EP Subcommittee on Human Rights, **Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea**. By now, all representatives of political prisoners mentioned as Sakharov Prize laureates 2017 have been liberated, except **Leopoldo Lopez** who remains under house arrest. After the award ceremony last December, the European Parliament strongly supported Lorent Saleh's mother Yamile to raise awareness of his case and sponsored her tour to European capitals.

Nurit Peled addresses EP Budget Committee

09-10-18: **2001 Sakharov Prize laureate Nurit Peled-Elhanan** paid an advocacy visit to the European Parliament where she intervened in an exchange of views at the Budget Committee on EU funding for the Palestinian Authority, helping to put into perspective allegations of hate speech in Palestinian school curriculum and textbooks.

Ladies in White concerned about the first EU - Cuba human rights dialogue

08-10-18: During their visit to the European Parliament, **2005 Sakharov Prize Laureate Ladies in White** along with other representatives of the Cuban civil society expressed concern about the EU's role in

the first formal human rights dialogue under the new EU-Cuba Agreement, a meeting held at that moment in Havana. In their view, the EU “has left aside its values for the sake of an economic agreement”. Another point of criticism was that the upcoming constitutional reform is not matched with adequate political reforms. They suggested that the EU “should reshape the agreement so that EU funding for Cuba does not eventually create more scarcity and misery”.

Council of Europe awards Oyub Titiev with the 2018 Václav Havel Human Rights Prize

08-10-18: During a ceremony held in Strasbourg, **Oyub Titiev** was awarded the Václav Havel prize of the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly. for his outstanding action in defence of human rights. Titiev is the Head of Chechnya office of **Memorial**, **2009 Sakharov Prize laureate**. The EU Delegation to the Council of Europe [stated](#) that “8 October marked a day to pay tribute to Oyub Titiev and other human rights defenders, as well as journalists and media actors, who have shown great courage in pursuing and exercising their right to their profession, and to freedom of expression.” Titiev has been imprisoned since January 2018 on fabricated charges. Despite a strong international outcry in his defense, the court in Chechnya refused to consider evidence that the case is manipulated and extended his detention until 22 December 2018.

Venezuelan opposition politician Fernando Albán found dead in suspicious circumstances

08-10-18: **Fernando Albán**, municipal councillor in Caracas, was found dead on the premises of the Venezuelan Intelligence Service (SEBIN). He was arrested three days earlier at Caracas airport for his alleged involvement in a drone attack against President **Maduro**. Alban was returning from New York, where he had participated in a delegation tha had denounced human rights abuses and crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Venezuelan regime.

The Chairs of the EP Foreign Affairs Committee **David McAllister** and of the EP Human Rights Subcommittee **Pier Antonio Panzeri**, [considered](#) his death as “another attack on the Venezuelan democratic opposition, including on political prisoners who were awarded the Parliament’s Sakharov Prize in 2017”. They also urged the Venezuelan authorities to immediately release all information regarding Fernando Alban’s death and hold those responsible accountable for this crime.

Ladies in White, 2005 Sakharov Laureate, discussed at the UN

16-10-18: Luis Almagro, Secretary of the Organization of American States (OAS), in a UN meeting focusing on political prisoners in Cuba, [denounced](#) the Cuban authorities "for systematically using repressive methods against those who dare to express opinions different than those of the government". In his speech, Almagro referred to Blanca Reyes, founder of **Ladies in White, 2005 Sakharov Prize Laureate**. Five members of Ladies in White are currently imprisoned for their political activism – Marta Sánchez González, Nieves de la Caridad Matamoros González, Aimara Nieto Muñoz, Yolanda Santos Ayala and Xiomara de las Mercedes Cruz Miranda.

EP RESOLUTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS BREACHES IN CHINA, BELARUS AND UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

04-10-18: In three resolutions adopted during its first October plenary session, the European Parliament called on [China](#) to end mass arbitrary detentions of minorities in the Xinjiang region. The European Parliament also voiced concern on State harassment and detention of journalists in [Belarus](#). Furthermore, MEPs urged the [UAE](#) to free all prisoners of conscience including **Ahmed Mansour**.

Link: [EP Press release](#)

On-line info: [Sakharov Prize Network website](#)