

SAKHAROV PRIZE NETWORK NEWSLETTER 03/2017

LAMYA HAJI BASHAR, HAUWA IBRAHIM, AND DR DENIS MUKWEGE SPEAK OUT FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN BRUSSELS

08-03-17: At the occasion of the Women's Day, **Lamya Haji Bashar and Hauwa Ibrahim, 2016 and 2005 Sakharov Prize Laureates**, gave keynote speeches in a workshop organised by the European



Parliament on **freedom from violence and economic empowerment of women**. Speaking to a large public composed from women parliamentarians from EU and non-EU parliaments Hauwa Ibrahim stressed the importance of an inclusive and quality education for girls, while Lamya Haji Bashar called the international community not to forget the women and children held captive by the so-called Islamic State (ISIS). Both then took part in a public conference where a [video message](#) of Dr

Laureate Dr Mukwege suggested Hauwa Ibrahim and Lamya Haji Bashar to unite their efforts to give a voice to survivors of violence. Both laureates met the EP President **Antonio Tajani** who praised them for their exceptional work.

Nadia Murad calls upon the international community to act against ISIS

9-03-17: **Last year Sakharov Prize Laureate Nadia Murad**, who is also a UNODC Goodwill Ambassador, delivered a powerful and emotional speech at an event on Fight against Impunity for Atrocities: Bringing ISIS to Justice. She deplored that “no ISIS fighter has been brought to justice” and urged the Iraqi government and the UN to investigate the atrocities committed by ISIS and to bring justice to the victims. Link: [Nadia Murad's speech at the UN](#)

Raif Badawi ordered to pay a one million riyal fine (€245,000)

20-03-17: The verdict plus one million riyal fine against the **2015 Sakharov Prize Laureate** have been confirmed by Saudi Arabia's justice authorities, as announced by the [Badawi Foundation](#). **The fine is added to the ten years imprisonment and 1000 lashes Raif Badawi** has been sentenced to. In response, EU Parliament Vice-President [Ulrike Lunacek](#) urged for his “unconditional release”. Raif Badawi has already spent nearly 5 years in jail.

Belarusian Association of Journalists reports on heavy crackdown on journalists in Belarus

26-03-17: The **Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ)** reports that journalists have been heavily pressured in Belarus recently, as at least **103 journalists have been arrested, detained, or beaten up** between the 10th and 26th of March. The **2004 Sakharov Prize Laureate organisation** denounces a “general clampdown on peaceful protests”, as around **700 people have been apprehended**, with 300 to 400 of them expected to be sentenced.

On March 23, Reporters without Borders, another Sakharov Prize Laureate, sent an open letter to Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, strongly condemning the continuing wave of detentions and harassment of peaceful protesters, journalists, human rights defenders, civil society activists, and opposition party members in Belarus.

Link: [Violations of journalists' rights in Belarus in 2017 \(BAJ\)](#)

Russia condemned by the European Court of Human Rights for direct involvement in Oleg Orlov's kidnapping

14-03-17: The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has found that “the persons who took the applicants [Oleg Orlov and three journalists] from the hotel to the field near Nesterovskaya and

subjected them to ill-treatment on the night of 23 November 2007 were State agents.” **Oleg Orlov**, Head of **Memorial Human Rights Center - 2009 Sakharov Prize Laureate** - had been abducted and beaten up while covering protests in Ingushetia (North Caucasus). The ECtHR thus stated that **Oleg Orlov’s freedom from ill-treatment, right to liberty, security, and effective remedies had been violated by the Russian State, which has been condemned to pay €84,000 to the four victims.**

Link: [ECtHR judgment](#)

Xanana Gusmão meets with the EU Election Observation Mission in Timor-Leste

18-03-17: Former Timorese President & former Prime Minister **Xanana Gusmão, 1999 Sakharov Prize Laureate**, met with an EP Delegation led by **MEP Anna Gomes** and composed of 7 members of the European Parliament. The EP delegation was conducting **an election observation mission** of this year’s presidential and legislative elections in East Timor. Speaking after the elections, MEP Anna Gomes noted that these were the first national vote organised without the assistance of the United Nations, and were a significant step on the path to the embedding of democracy in Timor Leste.

Link: [EU Election Observation Mission in Timor-Leste 2017](#)

Reporters Without Borders sets up a centre to protect women journalists in Afghanistan

07-03-17: **Reporters Without Borders, Sakharov Prize Laureate 2005**, has set up a centre to protect women journalists in **the second most dangerous country for the profession after Syria**. Around 300 to 400 women journalists are active in the country. Besides advocating for better working conditions and rights for women journalists, the centre will also **aim at changing the perception that journalism is not a suitable job for women**. Link: [RSF](#)

Kofi Annan’s Commission reports on the Rohingya

16-03-17: The advisory Commission on Rakhine State, appointed by Myanmar’s government and chaired by the former UN Secretary General and **2003 Sakharov Prize Laureate Kofi Annan**, submitted its intermediary report on the crisis in Rakhine State, where the Rohingya community is suffering from persecution. The Commission notably **advocates for “unimpeded humanitarian access” as well as for “independent and impartial investigation”** on the human rights violations.

Link: [Interim Report](#) ; [UN Human Rights Council mission](#)

60 Human Rights Defenders gathered at the European Parliament

20 & 21-03-17: Together with the OSCE/ODHIHR, the European Parliament hold a conference aiming at strengthening Regional Human Rights Defenders’ Networks in the **Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and Turkey**. **More than 60 participating Human Rights Defenders** exchanged on the international and regional **mechanisms for HRDs’ protection and addressed recommendations to the EU and its partners** which will be presented soon in written form also. MEPs, including **AFET Chair David McAllister**, representatives of different EU institutions, as well as of the Council of Europe and the OSCE took part in the event. **President Tajani’s** strong stance on **Turkey** was widely reported in the media; it echoed expectations by participants for clear and strong EU messages on human rights violations. Link: [EP President Tajani speech](#)

EP URGENCY RESOLUTIONS ON PASTOR EVAN MAWARIRE IN ZIMBABWE, THE UKRAINIAN PRISONERS IN RUSSIA AND THE SITUATION IN CRIMEA, AND SENATOR DE LIMA IN THE PHILIPPINES

16-03-17: In three resolutions adopted during the March Plenary, the European Parliament voiced deep concern on the restriction of freedom of expression in [Zimbabwe](#), requesting the politically oriented charges on Pastor Evan Mawarire to be withdrawn, called [Russia](#) to release arbitrarily detained Ukrainian citizens in Russia and in the occupied territories of Ukraine, and demanded the immediate release of Senator Leila M. De Lima while condemning the extrajudicial killings in [the Philippines](#). Link: [EP Press release](#)