



## SAKHAROV PRIZE NETWORK NEWSLETTER 7-8/2015

### LADIES IN WHITE ARRESTED IN CUBA AHEAD OF THE POPE'S VISIT

30-06-2015: Cuban police has arrested several civil society activists and opposition leaders including **Berta Soler of the Ladies in White, Sakharov Prize Laureate 2005** when they tried to protest against the ban on the opposition activists to attend a Catholic mass. The ban was imposed by a Cuban Catholic priest. These arrests are likely to be a reaction of Cuban authorities on Berta Soler's statements in which she expressed her intent to meet Pope Francis during his upcoming visit to Cuba in September 2015. She said to have passed information about human rights in Cuba to Vatican officials, including evidence of recent repressions against human rights activists. Link: [Panam Post](#); [The Guardian](#); [Las Vegas Sun](#)

### BAJ commemorates the 15th anniversary of Dmitry Zavadski's disappearance

10-07-2015: In an open letter, the **Belarusian Association of Journalists (Sakharov Prize Laureate 2004)** commemorates the disappearance of BAJ member Dmitry Zavadski, which occurred under unclear circumstances in July 2000 at the Minsk National Airport. According to sources in Belarus, former BAJ member Zavadski was murdered because of his footage showing Belarusian security agents fighting in Chechnya alongside Chechen rebels. The Belarusian Association of Journalist also demands that competent law enforcement agencies hold a full investigation into the circumstances of the journalist's disappearance. Links: [BAJ](#); [IFEX](#)

### Wei Jingsheng's campaign against Jiang Zemin

22-07-2015: **Sakharov Prize Laureate 1996 Wei Jingsheng** has recently announced his support for a campaign by Chinese citizens to bring former Communist Party leader Jiang Zemin to justice for crimes against humanity and genocide. The activist accuses Jiang Zemin of having committed 'a personal crusade' in 1999 to eradicate the followers of the Falun Gong practice, a traditional Chinese spiritual practice with also moral teachings. The persecution came along with a hate campaign leading to the imprisonment of hundreds of thousands dissidents, and various acts of violence. Link: [The Epoch Times](#)

### EP President Schulz deeply regrets the verdict for Leyla and Arif Yunus

15-08-2015: EP President Martin Schulz expressed his dismay and regret of the news of the lengthy prison sentence for Leyla Yunus, nominee to the 2014 Sakharov Prize, and her husband Arif Yunus. **Leyla Yunus**, a prominent human rights defender and outspoken government critic, has been director of the Institute for Peace and Democracy in Azerbaijan until her arrest in April 2014. On 13 August, she was charged with a prison sentence of 8.5 years, and a separate treason case is still open for investigation. In his statement President Schulz called for immediate release of Leyla and Arif Yunus, particularly given Leyla Yunus' deteriorating health. Link: [EP President](#)

### EP URGENCY RESOLUTIONS

09-07-2015: During the July plenary session the European Parliament adopted six human rights urgency resolutions. The EP expresses its serious concern at the rapidly deteriorating political, security and humanitarian situation in [Yemen](#), and its grave concern about the worsening political and humanitarian situation in [Burundi](#) and the wider region. In a resolution [on the Srebrenica](#)

[Commemoration](#), the EP commemorates and honours all the victims of the Srebrenica genocide and of all the atrocities during the wars in the former Yugoslavia. In a resolution on [the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular the case of the two detained human rights activists Yves Makwambala and Fred Bauma](#), the EP calls the DRC authorities to release the activists immediately and unconditionally, and to drop all charges against them. A resolution on [Bahrain, in particular the case of Nabeel Rajab](#), it calls for the dropping of charges and immediate and unconditional release of all human rights defenders, political activists and other individuals detained and charged with alleged violations related to the rights of expression, peaceful assembly and association, including Nabeel Rajab, Sheikh Ali Salman and the 'Bahrain 13'. Finally, a resolution [on the situation of two Christian pastors in Sudan](#) calls on the Sudanese authorities to drop all charges against Pastor Michael Yat and Pastor Peter Yen Reith and asks for their immediate and unconditional release.

[Sakharov Prize Network website](#)