

SAKHAROV PRIZE NETWORK
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SAKHAROV WEEK 2019: Ilham Tohti

On **18 December**, the **2019 Sakharov Prize** was awarded to Uyghur human rights defender and economics professor **Ilham Tohti**. His daughter **Jewher Ilham** represented the imprisoned laureate in Strasbourg. At the award ceremony, EP President Sassoli called for the immediate and unconditional release of Tohti and all other Sakharov laureates jailed for defending human rights. Jewher Ilham urged the audience to support her father's cause: "I ask you in this room and those who are listening, do you see a problem with the way the Chinese government is treating Uyghur people? If you see a problem, please work towards a solution." She also met with Political Groups, Committees and Delegations and gave media interviews. The Sakharov Prize finalists and their representatives also attended the ceremony. They met with MEPs and political groups to discuss their causes.

Link: [European Parliament](#)

EP Resolution on the Situation of the Uyghur in China

19-12-2019: During the same plenary session, the EP adopted a resolution in which it expressed its deepest concerns about the increasingly repressive regime that Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic minorities are facing in China. Parliament demanded that the Chinese authorities respect their fundamental freedoms, immediately release Ilham Tohti and all other human rights defenders, activists, lawyers, journalists and petitioners detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their freedom of expression.

Raif Badawi's hunger strike

10-12-2019: 2015 Sakharov Prize laureate **Raif Badawi** and his lawyer Waleed Abulkhair launched a hunger strike to protest their recent solitary confinement and ill-treatment in a Saudi prison. Blogger Raif Badawi was sentenced to 10 years in prison and 1,000 lashes for blasphemy and apostasy. Abulkhair is serving a 15-year sentence for criticising the unjust sentencing of other citizens, including Badawi. When receiving the news on Raif's ill-treatment and hunger strike, EP Vice-President Heidi Hautala tweeted "Stop torturing political prisoners! Once again, we ask for their release."

Call for applications: The Sakharov Fellowship

From 23 March to 4 April, the European Parliament's annual **Sakharov Fellowship** will provide 14 human rights defenders from non-European countries the opportunity to follow an intensive training at the European Parliament in Brussels and the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation in Venice. During two weeks, the human rights defenders are provided with trainings, resources and tools to support their challenging work. Over time, the Sakharov Fellowship will help the Parliament to grow a pool of human rights defenders with whom it can closely work together.

Interested in applying? The application form can be found [here](#).

Claudelize's fight

4-12-2019: 2019 Sakharov Prize finalist **Claudelize Silva dos Santos** addressed the EP Human Rights Subcommittee on her fight for the preservation of the Amazon rainforest, on the killing of her brother and sister-in-law and on the dangers she faces because of her activism. Claudelize was also one of the keynote speakers at the 21st edition of the annual EU-NGO Forum in Brussels, which focused on "Building a Fair Environmental Future."

Saleh's Walk of Freedom

10-12-2019: To celebrate the International Human Rights Day, 2017 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Lorent Saleh** and EP President David Sassoli inaugurated the Sakharov Walk of Freedom. This walk consists of 43 ceramic-based tiles on the Solidarność Esplanade outside the European Parliament in Brussels. Each tile is dedicated to one of the Sakharov Prize laureates. Lorent Saleh also participated, together with MEP Isabel Santos (S&D) and MEP Javier Nart (Renew), in a conference on the risks linked to human rights activism. Link: [European Parliament](#)

Lawyers for Nasrin

29-11-2019: The Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) - representing more than one million European lawyers - granted its 2019 Human Rights Award to four imprisoned Iranian lawyers. 2012 Sakharov Prize laureate **Nasrin Sotoudeh**, who is currently serving a 38-year prison sentence, was one of the four lawyers awarded the prize. Lawyer organisations from the G7 countries also signed a declaration demanding the Iranian government to release the imprisoned lawyers.

Links: [CCBE](#), [Affiches Parisiennes](#), [Algemeiner](#), [Radio Free Europe](#), [Law Society International](#), [Radio Farda](#), [CNB](#)

Parisian honours for Sentsov and Mukwege

30-12-2019: Paris City Hall organised two parallel ceremonies to honour 2018 Sakharov Prize laureate **Oleg Sentsov** and 2014 Sakharov Prize laureate **Denis Mukwege**. For Mukwege, a large ceremony was organised by Paris City Hall in cooperation with the Protestant Federation of France. Sentsov received an Honorary Citizenship of the City of Paris from the city's mayor. Radio France Culture also organised an event with Sentsov in Théâtre de la Ville.

The new International Mukwege Chair: a successful congress

13-11-2019. The Mukwege Chair, named in honour of 2014 Sakharov Prize laureate **Denis Mukwege**, was launched with a three-day programme at the University of Liège, Belgium. The Mukwege Chair aims to engage in transversal and interdisciplinary research on sexual violence against women, creating a dialogue between medicine, psychology, sociology and law. An international congress of the Mukwege Chair will be organised on a yearly basis at one of the Chair's partner universities.

Links: University of Liege: [Programme](#) and [article](#), [RTBF.be](#)

Urgency Resolutions

19-12-2019: During the December plenary session, the EP adopted urgency resolutions on **Russia, Burkina Faso and Afghanistan**. On **Russia**, it expressed deep concern on the recent amendment including private individuals in the foreign agents law. The EP considers the law a curtailment of freedom of speech and urges the Russian Federation to repeal it. MEPs highlighted the deterioration of the human rights situation in **Burkina Faso** against the rise of

religious violence against Christians and Muslims. The EP calls on the Burkinabé government to fight extremism and guarantee the rule of law. The EP also commits to support food security and to help halt the escalating violence in the region. In their third resolution, the EP focused on the allegations of sexual abuse of boys in **Afghanistan's** Logar Province. MEPs urged the Afghan government to protect children's rights, provide support to the victims, to create an independent investigation and to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable.