

EP SAKHAROV PRIZE NETWORK

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Razan Zaitouneh kidnapped in Syria along with her husband and two other activists

Sakharov Prize Laureate **Razan Zaitouneh** was kidnapped in Syria on 9 December, along with her husband and two other activists. Human rights activists alerted the Human Rights Actions Unit to the kidnapping, which took place in Douma, a rebel-controlled area of Syria.

The news was initially kept quiet as her group, the Violations Documentation Centre (VDC), hoped to identify the kidnappers and negotiate her release. This has not yet been possible and VDC and the Local Development and Small Projects Support Office (LDSPS) - both of which **Ms Zaitouneh** co-founded - issued the following statement on 10 December:

"An unknown armed group kidnapped last night 9/12/2013, human rights lawyer and activist **Razan Zaitouneh**, activist and ex-political prisoner Samira Khalil, activist and **Razan's** spouse Wael Hamada, and the lawyer and poet Nazim Hamadi from the office of the VDC and LDSPS in Douma, Damascus suburbs.

Her kidnapping and the kidnapping of her colleagues indicates yet again the endeavour of some to undermine any form of civil action to help Syrians in the liberated areas to rule and provide for themselves.

We, at the VDC and LDSPS, condemn with the strongest words this kidnapping and ask for the immediate release of **Razan**, Samira, Wael and Nazim without any conditions."

Calls for **Ms Zaitouneh's** release were repeated at a high-level meeting on Syria, chaired jointly by the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) and Committee on Development (DEVE).

Media continue to report that no group has yet claimed responsibility for the kidnapping, although publications including *Al Monitor* have widely reported that Islamist rebel factions are likely to blame.

Shortly before her abduction, **Ms Zaitouneh** recorded a video message denouncing the regime's crimes and the daily killings occurring in the Damascus suburb of Douma which is currently under siege by government forces. In the video, the Laureate reports on the people's suffering due to the lack of access to basic needs such as food. "

See link below for the full video.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pmRGpOwmAUE>

<http://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCABRE9B90YH20131210>

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/peaceful-protest-leader-in-syria-disappears-islamist-rebels-suspected-of-role/2013/12/10/8d1e3364-61d0-11e3-a7b4-

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/01/syria-duma-activists-opposition-zaitouneh-abduction.html>

Statement on Razan Zaitouneh by the office of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton

On 17 December, the office of EU High Representative **Catherine Ashton** released a statement regarding the kidnapping of Sakharov Prize Laureate **Razan Zaitouneh**. The statement expresses the High Representative's "great concern" at **Ms Zaitouneh's** situation, and calls for her "immediate and unconditional release".

See link below for the full statement.

http://www.eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/131217_02_en.pdf

Arab bloggers call for the release of Razan Zaitouneh

The participants of the 4th Arab Bloggers Summit, which took place from 20-23 January 2014 in Amman, Jordan, released a statement in support of **Razan Zaitouneh's** cause and demanding the release of the 2011 Sakharov Laureate.

The statement ends with an appeal to the world leaders participating in the Geneva II Middle East Peace Conference to "establish verifiable mechanisms to protect and secure the release of opinion detainees and kidnappees in Syria."

<https://ab14.globalvoicesonline.org/2014/01/1445>

EP DEVE and AFET committees hold high-level meeting on Syria

On 18 December, The Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) jointly with the Committee on Development (DEVE) held a High Level Debate on "The Conflict in Syria and the Humanitarian Impact in the Region". The aim of the debate was to allow an exchange of views involving EU Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Kristalina Georgieva, the Executive Secretary General of the EEAS, Pierre Vimont and the representatives of OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and UNDP on critical issues. These included humanitarian access and delivery, the protection of civilians, as well as the impact of the Syria crisis on neighbouring countries and their population.

Participants in the debate expressed strong support for the "Geneva II Conference", the UN-backed initiative which aims to bring together the Assad government and opposition groups to discuss the formation of a transitional government for Syria.

The Geneva II Conference has also received the support of Kurdish Sakharov Prize Laureate **Leyla Zana**. **Ms Zana** has been working to build consensus among Syria's rival Kurdish parties ahead of the Conference.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/afet/home.html?sessionId=761A1E3F3585941BDF11781AEF75593F.node2>
<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/12/syrian-kurds-geneva-ii-welcome.html#>

At least 90 Damas de Blanco arrested at demonstration marking Human Rights Day

On 10 December, more than 90 members of the **Damas de Blanco** (2005 Sakharov Prize Laureates) were detained by Cuban authorities as they attempted to participate in a protest march. Among those arrested was the **Damas'** leader, **Berta Soler**.

The march was organised to coincide with Human Rights Day. The majority of those detained had been beaten and sustained various injuries.

Scores of other activists were also arrested or beaten by authorities. According to Ángel Moya, the husband of **Berta Soler**, the total number of arrests passed 130. Many of those detained were reportedly threatened with firing squads.

Other activists, including members of the **Damas**, had been prevented by authorities from leaving their homes to attend the demonstration. It has also been reported that authorities blocked activists' phones before and after the event, in order to reduce the number of participants and to prevent reporting of the tactics used to disperse the demonstrators. When the Human Rights Actions Unit attempted to contact **Berta Soler** directly on 10 December, a man answered and said, in a firm voice, "This is not Berta's telephone."

HRAC was able to contact **Ms Soler** later the same day. She stated that she and many members of the **Damas de Blanco** had been released, but a number were still being held for interrogation. On 13 December it was reported that the remaining detainees had been released.

<http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/politics/2013/12/10/cuba-ladies-in-white-harassed-while-marking-human-rights-day/>
<http://www.unpacu.org/amenazando-con-fusilamientos-cientos-de-detenciones-en-el-dia-mundial-de-los-derechos-humanos/> (Spanish)
<http://www.elnuevoherald.com/2013/12/12/1635548/liberan-a-disidentes-tras-ofensiva.html> (Spanish)
http://www.diariodecuba.com/derechos-humanos/1386849628_6314.html (Spanish)

Statement by Barbara Lochbihler MEP: serious concerns about the situation of Sakharov Prize Laureates

Regarding the kidnapping of **Razan Zaitouneh** and the arrest of members of the **Damas de Blanco**, **Barbara Lochbihler**, chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights in the European Parliament, commented:

"I am deeply concerned about the situation of the kidnapped Syrian human rights activist **Razan Zaitouneh** as well as her husband Wa'el Hamada and two colleagues, Nazem Hamadi and Samira Khalil. When the conflict broke out, human rights lawyer **Zaitouneh** and her colleagues started documenting human rights abuses, committed both by the Assad regime and the rebels. They thereby made an invaluable contribution to the fight against impunity. I call for their immediate release, without any further conditions.

I also call for the immediate release of all peaceful protestors arrested on 10 December by the Cuban police including those belonging to the **Damas de Blanco** movement, a human rights organisation awarded with the Sakharov Prize in 2005. On 7 December already, the current head of **Damas de Blanco**, **Berta Soler**, had been detained at Havana airport, when returning from the 25th Anniversary Conference of the Sakharov Prize in Strasbourg and an event in Vilnius, Lithuania, organised by the European Parliament Sakharov Network. On 10 December, she was again arrested, together with her husband, and held in custody for several hours."

Memorial Anti-Discrimination Centre ordered to register as "foreign agent" as NGO trials continue

On 12 December, the Anti-Discrimination Centre (ADC) of **Memorial** (2009 Sakharov Prize Laureates) was ordered by a St. Petersburg court to register as a "foreign agent", under a 2012 law concerning NGOs which receive funding from abroad. The organisation will therefore be obliged to apply for registration with the Russian Ministry of Justice.

President of the European Parliament **Martin Schulz** has described the ruling as "clear intimidation" by the Russian government, and denounced it as "unacceptable". ADC **Memorial** was originally charged over a report entitled "Roma, migrants, activists: victims of police abuse", which it submitted to the UN Committee Against Torture in November 2012. The case was rejected by the court on the grounds that the prosecution's case was unfounded. However, the Leninsky District Court has now ruled that ADC **Memorial's** activities, allegedly funded by foreign donors, are of a political nature.

Tolikan Ismailova of the International Federation for Human Rights has stated the trial was "marked by injustice and discrimination", and that "the court satisfied all the demands of the prosecutor and rejected all the petitions of the lawyers of ADC **Memorial**."

Meanwhile, on 18 November, a Moscow court heard the case of sister organisation **Memorial** Human Rights Centre (HRC). **Memorial** HRC have appealed a court order issued in April to register as a foreign agent, and at this latest hearing was successful in obtaining a postponement of the trial until 4 February.

The postponement allows time for a ruling on the "foreign agent" law from either the European Court of Human Rights or the Russian Constitutional Court. Both courts have received complaints from a group of NGOs, including **Memorial**, regarding the law.

Oleg Orlov, head of **Memorial** HRC, had been due to participate in the Sakharov Prize 25th Anniversary Conference in Strasbourg from 18 to 20 November, but was unable to attend due to the hearing.

http://rapsinews.com/judicial_news/20131213/270088624.html

<http://www.fidh.org/en/eastern-europe-central-asia/russia/14381-russian-federation-adc-memorial-officially-declared-a-foreign-agent-by-the>
http://rapsinews.com/judicial_news/20131118/269691051.html

Berta Soler (Damas de Blanco) and Aliaksandr Milinkevich together at the EP Vilnius event

On 5-6 December **Berta Soler** of the **Damas de Blanco** (2005 Sakharov Prize Laureates) and



Aliaksandr Milinkevich (2006 Sakharov Prize Laureate) participated in a Sakharov Prize Network event in Vilnius, Lithuania. The event was designed to highlight the importance of the European Parliament's involvement in the defence of human rights. The topic of discussion was "The Sakharov Prize Laureates and their struggle for freedom of thought".

The event was hosted by **Vytautas Leskevicius**, Deputy Minister of Foreign

Affairs of Lithuania, and moderated by **Leonidas Donskis** MEP, Member of the Sub-Committee on Human Rights. Participants included including the Deputy Minister, MEPs, students from Vilnius and Kaunas Universities, NGOs, think tank representatives, Members of the Lithuanian Parliament, journalists and Lilya Shabanova of Russian pro-democracy group Golos.

The Laureates stressed the need for the active involvement of the international community in shaping relations with the non-democratic regimes. **Ms Soler** insisted that the EU should maintain pressure on the Cuban government with regard to human rights clauses in the Common Position and in any future bilateral agreements. **Mr Milinkevich** expressed his concern regarding the continual intimidation and humiliation perpetrated by the authorities against human rights defenders in Belarus. He declared his support for greater European integration for Belarus, and a critical and constructive dialogue with the Belarusian authorities, in particular with President Lukashenko.

Both Laureates insisted that the international community should no longer tolerate impunity in the world, and argued that those who fight against arbitrary arrests and injustice should be defended and supported by the international community.

Representatives of Russian Sakharov Prize Laureates **Memorial** were invited to participate in the event, but were unable to travel due to the organisation's ongoing court case in Moscow.

Berta Soler detained on return to Cuba

On 7 December, **Berta Soler**, leader of 2005 Sakharov Prize Laureates the **Damas de Blanco**, was detained at Havana Airport as she returned from Europe. **Ms Soler** is said to have been provoked by undercover state security agents, and detained after she responded with shouts of "Down with Fidel! Down with Raúl!" and "Cuba yes - Castro NO!" She was arrested and detained for investigation for 7 hours, before being taken to her home by agents.

<http://babalublog.com/2013/12/07/breaking-newsberta-soler-leader-of-peaceful-dissident-group-in-cuba-arrested-upon-her-arrival-in-havana-today/>

<http://translatingcuba.com/cuban-state-security-agents-arrest-berta-soler-at-the-airport/>

Salih Osman addresses EU-NGO Forum

The 2007 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Salih Osman** was invited as the representative of the Sakharov Prize Network to participate in the EU-NGO Forum, which took place in Brussels from 4-6 December and was attended by high-level officials and over 200 NGOs from across the globe. **Mr Osman** was asked to address the opening session of the Forum, and he took the opportunity to draw the attention of key officials and civil society representatives to pressing human rights issues facing Sudan, Africa and the wider world.

Mr Osman focused primarily on the need to end impunity for violators of fundamental rights. He gave a strong declaration of his support for the International Criminal Court (ICC) as the only means of redress available to many victims of rights violations - a sentiment which was echoed by Stavros Lambrinidis, the EU's Special Representative for Human Rights. **Mr Osman** referred to the example of his native Sudan, denouncing the genocide which has been taking place in Darfur for the past 10 years and the failure to bring those responsible to justice.

The Human Rights Actions Unit enabled **Mr Osman** also to meet with officials and civil society representatives informally on the fringe of the Forum. The discussions held during the Forum led to the identification of three specific areas for follow-up action within the Sakharov Prize Network: support to the ICC, action in favour of children's rights and action against torture.

EP delegation to Iran meets with Sakharov Prize Laureates Nasrin Sotoudeh and Jafar Panahi

On 18 December, a European Parliament delegation to Iran met with 2012 Sakharov Prize Laureates **Nasrin Sotoudeh** and **Jafar Panahi**. The meeting follows the cancellation of a visit to Iran by MEPs in October 2012 after the delegation was denied authorisation to meet with the Laureates, both of whom remain barred from leaving Iran.

The meeting is said to have angered conservative members of the Islamic Republic's political establishment. The head of the Court of Administrative Justice, Mohammad Jafar Montazeri,

remarked, "These people [the European Parliamentary delegation] have met in secret with two seditious elements of the 2009 sedition. It has to be clarified who has facilitated this meeting." MP Kazem Jalali added that the meeting amounted to "interference in Iran's internal affairs". The ISNA news agency has since reported that the Greek chargé d'affaires, whose embassy arranged the meeting, was summoned to the Iranian Foreign Ministry "to be informed of Iran's displeasure".

On 27 December, **Ms Sotoudeh's** family home was raided and looted. **Ms Sotoudeh** refrained from directly accusing security services of having orchestrated the break-in as a reaction to her meeting with the EP delegation, stating, "How related is this incident to the recent uproar remains to be seen pending the police and security forces' will to pursue the matter and finding the perpetrators."

<http://freejafarpanahi.wordpress.com/2013/12/18/4423/>

<http://www.payvand.com/news/13/dec/1099.html>

<http://news.yahoo.com/iran-slams-euro-meeps-meeting-dissidents-072027052.html>

<http://www.iranhumanrights.org/2013/12/sotoudeh-raid/>

"Rohani has to release all political prisoners" - Nasrin Sotoudeh

The 2012 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Nasrin Sotoudeh**, in a recent interview with the Spanish newspaper El País, demanded the release of all political prisoners in Iran, including the reformist leaders Hossein Musavi, Mehdi Karrubi and Zahra Rahnava, who are currently under house arrest.

When asked about her time in prison and whether she suffered torture, she said: "Not physically, although not being able to see your family is a form of torture ... there were hard moments when I was not allowed to see my family, especially my daughter." **According to Ms Sotoudeh**, other female political prisoners suffered repeated psychological and physical violence during interrogations.

Regarding human rights violations in Iran, **Ms Sotoudeh** mentioned the death penalty as the most worrying and most damaging to the Iranian "national conscience". **Ms Sotoudeh's** remarks are part of the growing demand among Iranian human rights activists for President Rohani, who took office in August, to justify his reputation as a reformer. Shirin Ebadi, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate who represented **Ms Sotoudeh** at the 25th Anniversary Conference of the Sakharov Prize, has also been highly critical of Rohani. She expressed her outrage at the hanging of 16 government opponents after a clash that resulted in the death of 14 border guards. According to the state prosecutor, those convicted had nothing to do with the attack and were executed in retaliation.

http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2013/12/11/actualidad/1386792160_972874.html (Spanish)

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/11/nobel-laureate-criticises-iranian-president-201311619852614358.html>

Sakharov Prize Laureates criticise Russia amnesty

Numerous prisoners have been freed under an amnesty dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the Russian Constitution.

Among those freed are the imprisoned members of 2012 Sakharov Prize Nominees **Pussy Riot**, **Nadezhda Tolokonnikova** and **Maria Alyokhina**, who were released on 23 December the grounds that both have young children. **Mikhail Khodorkovsky**, another Sakharov Prize nominee, was released on 20 December. Others covered by the amnesty include the Greenpeace "Arctic 30" and protesters jailed after the May 2012 Bolotnaya demonstration, among a total of 25,000 others, will be freed under the amnesty.

Human rights activists, who earlier estimated that up to 100,000 people could benefit from the amnesty, have expressed their concern that the amnesty is not as broad as they had hoped.

Oleg Orlov, head of **Memorial** Human Rights Centre (2009 Sakharov Prize Laureates), has called the draft amnesty bill a "disappointment". His fellow Laureate **Lyudmila Alexeyeva** abandoned plans to deliver a speech in praise of the amnesty after learning that its scope would be narrower than anticipated.

The draft amnesty adopted by the Duma identifies three articles of the criminal code as "exceptions", which means that those who were convicted under them will be freed or relieved from punishment. It will not apply to those who committed crimes that posed a serious danger to society, and will give preference to convicts in vulnerable social categories and people who have served the country. The amnesty will be adopted before the end of the year and implemented within the next six months, a high-ranked source in the parliament told the newspaper *Izvestia*.

<http://rt.com/news/amnesty-bill-putin-parliament-951/>

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/duma-deputies-vow-to-support-amnesty/491198.html>

http://www.france24.com/en/20131218-russia-approves-amnesty-covering-pussy-riot-greenpeace-crew/#/?&_suid=138738388717508872880075656235

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-25460427>

Russian government grants to be provided to 124 NGO projects

The Russian government has ordered that 250 million Roubles (\$7.5 million) be distributed to NGOs. The Moscow Helsinki Group, the Union of Soldiers' Mothers Committees, 2009 Sakharov Prize Laureates **Memorial**, and the Agora association are among the winners of a tender for government grants. "As many as 124 projects from 47 regions of Russia have been declared the winners of the tender," For Civil Dignity said on its website.

Memorial historical and civil rights society head Arseny Roginsky told journalists that the financing of Russian NGOs decreased after the major Western donors curtailed their operations

in Russia. "We don't see it as shameful and consider it rightful to bid in a tender for government grants when this doesn't lead to a conflict of interest," Roginsky said.

The head of Moscow's Helsinki Group of human rights activists, **Lyudmila Alexeyeva**, said she would attend a meeting between campaigners and Russian President Vladimir Putin in mid-December. She said that she was invited to participate by telephone and that she would definitely go, adding that "Rights activists have to talk to the authorities even though it's the most difficult part of our work."

http://rbth.co.uk/news/2013/12/05/russian_government_grants_to_be_provided_to_124_ngo_projects_out_of_over_32292.html
<http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/710343>

Aung San Suu Kyi "could run for president in 2015"

On 28 December, Myanmar's ruling party said it is ready to amend the country's constitution and include a section that will allow the 1990 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Aung San Suu Kyi** to run in the next presidential elections in 2015.

The document currently bars anyone who is married or has children who are foreign nationals from being a candidate. The proposed amendment will merely say that spouse and children must be Myanmar citizens, therefore allowing **Ms Suu Kyi** to run for the presidency if her sons take Burmese citizenship.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2013/12/suu-kyi-party-myanmar-elections-20131228144916841111.html>

MEPs call for international inquiry into death of Oswaldo Payá

Members of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) have urged the EU External Action Service to push for a UN investigation into the death of Cuban Sakharov Prize Laureate **Oswaldo Payá**. The joint proposal of the European People's Party and the European Conservatives and Reformists coincided with the visit of **Mr Payá's** daughter, **Rosa María**, who has urged numerous national and international bodies to carry out independent inquiries into the mysterious circumstances of her father's death. **Mr Payá**, a pro-democracy activist and outspoken critic of the Castro regime, died in a car crash in 2012.

http://www.laprensasa.com/309_america-in-english/2307180_european-lawmakers-call-for-international-probe-of-cuban-dissidents-deaths.html

Taslima Nasreen criticises Indian Supreme Court's decision on law criminalising homosexuality

Taslima Nasreen, 1994 Sakharov Prize Laureate, has denounced the decision of India's Supreme Court on 11 December 2013 to overturn a lower court decision to decriminalise consensual same-sex acts. **Ms Nasreen**, who currently lives in India as an exile from Bangladesh and campaigns against religious extremism, tweeted: "India celebrated Human Rights Day yesterday. Today India passed the verdict against Human Rights to have consensual sex. #sec377 #shame" and "India banned love. Shame Shame!"

The law known as "Section 377" had been ruled unconstitutional back in 2009 by a High Court in Delhi. The decision provoked widespread controversial and was immediately opposed by many religious groups. Ejaz Maqbool, a lawyer representing religious groups stated that the "earlier judgement was wrong," and that the law could only be removed if that is the will of Indians and their representatives in Parliament.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/court-in-india-criminalizes-homosexuality/2013/12/11/ea7274a6-6227-11e3-a7b4-4a75ebc432ab_story.html

<http://www.governancenow.com/news/regular-story/sc-gay-sex-ruling-dubbed-political-regressive>

Court case brought against Taslima Nasreen for calling clerics who issue *fatwas* "criminals"

A court case against 1994 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Taslima Nasreen** has been registered in an Indian court, following a complaint alleging that **Ms Nasreen** insulted Islam on Twitter. The complaint was made on 4 December by the son of a cleric in Kotwali, Uttar Pradesh. It is alleged that **Ms Nasreen's** remarks on Twitter offended clerics and the Muslim community.

Ms Nasreen claimed on Twitter that in India criminals that issue *fatwas* against women are not arrested.



Ms Nasreen was previously the subject of a *fatwa* in 2007 by the President of the All India Ittehad Council, Maulana Tauqir Raza, who offered a reward for anyone who carried out the *quatal* ("extermination") of the "notorious woman."

More recently the same cleric declared his support for the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Delhi Assembly elections, leading to criticism of the party's leader, Arvind Kejriwal, for associating his campaign with the cleric who called for the murder of **Ms Nasreen**.

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007%5C03%5C18%5Cstory_18-3-2007_pg7_3#.Unn5qseTpQs.twitter
<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/fir-against-author-taslina-nasreen-on-clerics-complaint/1203707/>
<http://www.ndtv.com/elections/article/assembly-polls/cleric-who-issued-fatwa-against-taslina-nasreen-may-campaign-for-arvind-kejriwal-441919>

Nasrin Sotoudeh message to NGO Lawyers for Lawyers

Nasrin Sotoudeh, 2012 Sakharov Prize Laureate, has posted a video message on her Facebook page supporting the NGO Lawyers for Lawyers. "I hope you are all well and I wish that you are victorious and persistent in your crucial activities," she said. In her message, **Ms Sotoudeh** praised the bravery of many Iranian lawyers "who despite all jeopardy still remain faithful to their professional oath." The 2012 Laureate drew attention to the case of the lawyers Mr Abdolfattah Soltani and Mr Mohammad Seif Zadeh, who have been arrested several times by the Iranian authorities. **Ms Sotoudeh** also called for their release, stating, "Although I believe that bearing detention in essence is much easier than keeping silence against injustice and for that reason my colleagues are bearing this pain, I truly wish that they will be set free immediately; and I wish that all lawyers in the entire world, including Iran, can conduct their professional duties without any fear of threat."

Full video: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=730002027012516>

Human rights organisations demand investigation into surveillance of Asmaa Mahfouz

On 1 January, a group of Egyptian human rights organisations submitted a complaint to the Public Prosecutor regarding the broadcast of Sakharov Prize Laureate **Asmaa Mahfouz's** private telephone conversations. Recordings of the calls were played on a talk show on Egyptian television. Other prominent activists, including 6 April Youth Movement founder Ahmed Maher, have been victims of similar violations of their privacy.

The group of organisations calling for an investigation have stated: "The illegal leak of recorded calls illustrates the beginning of a campaign, by unknown bodies, through host "Abdel Reheem Ali" in order to morally assassinate activists, who took part in January 25th Revolution, and to defame them before Egyptian public opinion."

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201401021503.html>

Egyptian activist Alaa Abd El Fattah arrested

The prominent Egyptian activist Alaa Abd El Fattah was arrested by Egyptian security forces on 28 November. He is the latest in a string of leading pro-democracy activists who have had criminal charges brought against them, including 2011 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Asmaa Mahfouz**.

Mr El Fattah is accused of inciting a demonstration in Cairo on 26 November in defiance of Law 107, which was adopted earlier this year and heavily restricts the right to public meetings, processions and peaceful demonstrations.



The Egyptian government's repression of peaceful protests has been highlighted by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, in a recent report.

<http://www.anhri.net/en/?p=14618>

<http://www.salem-news.com/articles/december042013/fattah-activist-wg.php>

<http://www.fidh.org/en/north-africa-middle-east/egypt/14317-egypt-arrest-of-mr-alaa-abdel-fatah>

<http://manalaa.net/node/87368>

Nurit Peled-Elhanan condemns human rights violations in Israel as it joins UN Human Rights Council

Israel has been accepted to join the list of nine states comprising the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). This move is considered a complete about-face for the UNHRC, which has condemned the Israeli state for human rights violations in the past - violations which, according to 2001 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Nurit Peled-Elhanan**, have persisted and even worsened. **Ms Peled-Elhanan** stated the following in a report to the Human Rights Actions Unit:

"This last week Israeli (sic) has committed violations of human rights in all their forms. The snow storm that surprised the country brought help and rescue to Jews only. Settlers were rescued by helicopters while Palestinians who live next to them were left to their own devices.

"Sudanese and Eritrean refugees that were locked in prison up to 2 years, marched for two days in the cold to Jerusalem to ask for their asylum seekers' rights. They were met with police unmeasured violence and thrown to jail again. This happened on the 18 of December, declared in Israel as the Day of the Immigrant.

"Gaza is still sinking, drowning in sewage and flood waters while Israel does not ease the siege and does not let construction material enter this city of death.

"These crimes are committed on top of the daily crimes of house demolition, arrests of children, harassment in checkpoint and the other routine crimes of the Israeli occupation. Please remember that silence is a crime. We must not be silent when governments are committing crimes against humanity."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/18/world/middleeast/african-refugees-protest-detainment-in-israel.html?smid=fb-share&r=0>

<http://www.maannnews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=658249>

<http://www.palestinecampaign.org/pscupdate20131203/>

Call for action in support of Sakharov Prize nominees imprisoned in Ethiopia

PEN International has issued a call to action for the imprisoned Ethiopian journalists **Reeyot Alemu** and **Eskinder Nega**. It is urging the Ethiopian government to release both from jail, and to give **Ms Alemu** access to the medical attention she needs.

Ms Alemu and **Mr Nega**, who were nominated for the Sakharov Prize in 2013, have been imprisoned since 2011 under Ethiopia's "Anti-Terrorism Proclamation". **Ms Alemu** was arrested after publishing newspaper articles which spoke out against the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front party. **Mr Nega** was accused of attempting to inspire anti-government revolt in the style of the Arab Spring after the publication of an article in which he condemned the imprisonment of journalists and activists in Ethiopia.

Both PEN and the journalists believe that their imprisonment is politically motivated, and results from their critical reporting. Each has issued a condemnation of the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation, which can be read in full via the links below.

<http://www.pen-international.org/newsitems/call-to-action-ethiopia-take-action-for-imprisoned-journalists-reeyot-alemu-and-eskinder-nega/>

<http://www.iwmf.org/anti-terrorism-proclamation-born-from-power-thirst/>

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/25/opinion/letter-from-ethiopias-gulag.html?_r=0

Cuban authorities seize children's toys in raids on Damas de Blanco and UNPACU

On 4 January, Cuban authorities seized hundreds of toys during a series of raids on homes and other premises linked to UNPACU (Patriotic Union of Cuba) and 2005 Sakharov Laureates the **Damas de Blanco**. Members of the dissident groups had planned to mark Three King's Day, Cuba's traditional day of gift-giving, by distributing the toys to children as - an act which the security forces viewed as a "provocation".

Targets of the raids included the home of UNPACU's founder, Jose Daniel Ferrer, and the headquarters of the **Damas de Blanco** in Havana. The **Damas'** leader, **Berta Soler**, reported that items seized also included food, a laptop, three printers and 70 chairs, as well as bed sheets and toilet paper that were to be distributed to the children's parents.

The **Damas** responded to the seizures by filing a complaint of looting against security forces. **Berta Soler** and **Laura Labrada**, daughter of the group's founder **Laura Pollán**, made the complaint at a police station in Havana on 7 January.

<http://www.adn.com/2014/01/02/3257366/cuban-police-seize-hundreds-of.html>

<http://www.martinoticias.com/content/damas-de-blanco-policia-denuncia/30869.html>

Dama de Blanco Sara Martha Fonseca begins exile in US

Sara Martha Fonseca, a prominent member of 2010 Sakharov Prize Laureates the **Damas de Blanco**, has gone into exile in the United States, along with her family. **Ms Fonseca**, who arrived in Miami on 8 January, cited the physical impact of police brutality as the primary reason for the move.

<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/agencia-efe/140109/cuban-dissident-goes-exile-us-family>

Castro regime cracks down on dissidents as Havana hosts Latin American leaders

On 28 and 29 January, the heads of state of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) met in Havana. The build-up to the summit was marked by widespread repression of dissidents as the Cuban government attempted to ensure that opposition activists would not use the occasion to draw attention to its human rights record. **Guillermo Fariñas** was placed under house arrest by police, who told him that he would be released at the end of the summit. Meanwhile, the **Damas de Blanco** reported that over 100 of their members were detained over the weekend preceding the summit.

The crackdown effectively blocked dissidents' plans to stage a "counter-summit", titled the Democratic Forum on International Relations and Human Rights. Opposition groups had also written to CELAC delegates, inviting them to participate in the Forum. However, Chilean President Sebastián Piñera, who met with **Damas de Blanco** leader **Berta Soler**, was the only delegate to accept the activists' invitation.

During the summit itself, delegates were silent on the subject of human rights. Discussions focused instead on topics such as economic cooperation and poverty reduction. According to the Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation (CCHRNR), the Cuban government made 6,424 "politically motivated" arrests in 2013. CCHRNR also stated that it received 1,123 reports of political arrests in December 2013 alone.

http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5h519hT_EauNlyugcLLiRMdUGzSMg?docId=1ca7a164-7a36-4821-a5f9-1ae3b8fe1170

<http://www.infobae.com/2014/01/27/1539777-amnistia-internacional-denuncio-una-campana-represion-cuba-la-cumbre-la-celac>

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2014/01/29/3901239/un-chief-says-he-raised-human.html>

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/29/raul-castro-celac-summit-poverty>

<http://gulfnws.com/news/world/usa/visiting-chile-president-meets-cuba-dissident-1.1284245>

<http://iwpr.net/report-news/cuban-political-arrests-top-5000>

Belarusian government considers pardon for Bialiatski

Reports from Belarus indicate that President Alexander Lukashenko will consider granting early release to the imprisoned Sakharov Prize nominee **Ales Bialiatski**. **Mr Bialiatski** was jailed for tax evasion in 2011, and has over a year of the original sentence left to serve. However,

it is believed that President Lukashenko may release the human rights activist if he "repays" the money he gained from the alleged evasion.

However, opposition activists are sceptical of President Lukashenko's apparent benevolence towards **Mr Bialiatski**. **Mr Bialiatski's** colleague at the Viasna Human Rights Centre, Tatiana Reviaka, the pardon would likely be motivated by the regime's desire to silence international criticism over political prisoners in the lead-up to Belarus' hosting of the 2014 Ice Hockey World Championship. A Belarusian district court has heard an appeal against the decision to prohibit the import of a book by 2013 Sakharov Prize nominee **Ales Bialiatski**. The appeal was lodged by Tatsiana Reviaka, a colleague of **Mr Bialiatski** at Viasna Human Rights Centre. According to Belarusian authorities, **Bialiatski's** book *Enlightened by Belarus* could "damage the image" of the country.

<http://www.indexoncensorship.org/2014/01/belarus-ales-bialiatski-might-walk-free/>
<http://www.charter97.org/en/news/2014/1/7/83309/>

In Russia "foreign agent means spy" Memorial states

On 22 January the Sub-Committee in Human Rights held a unique hearing on human rights in Russia bringing together Russian civil society representatives, Russian government officials, MEPs and EU officials including diplomats engaged in the human rights dialogue with Russia at the European Parliament in Brussels.

Speaking on the panel, **Mr Kirill Koroteev**, senior lawyer for **Memorial**, Sakharov Prize Laureate 2009, denounced Russia's controversial "foreign agents" law requiring NGOs to register as foreign agents if they are receiving funding from outside Russia. According to **Mr Koroteev**, the law fails to clearly define "political activity", and that charges of "malicious non-compliance" with the law levelled at NGO leaders do not have any clear basis. This ambiguity, in **Mr Koroteev's** view, allows for the law to be applied arbitrarily in order to persecute NGOs.

"NGOs have to invest a lot of time fighting court cases instead of focusing on their substantive work. The only solution to this situation is to abolish this law," **Mr Koroteev** said.

Memorial is one of hundreds of NGOs in Russia hit by this March 2013 law. The European Parliament, in a June 2013 resolution urged the Russian authorities "to stop registering NGOs as 'foreign agents' on the basis of a law which extended state control over NGOs".

Mr Konstantin Dolgov, Special Representative for Human Rights at the Russian Foreign Ministry, present at the meeting, in response to the **Memorial** representative noted that "he forgot to mention the grants **Memorial** receives from the Russian Budget. It is important that you [**Memorial**] continue to ask for these funds and get them as long as you stay in the Constitutional field and respect the law".

The DROI meeting also heard Ms Tanya Lokshina, Russia programme director at Human Rights Watch, who sounded a note of caution with reference to the recent amnesty to activists, including Sakharov Prize nominees **Mikhail Khodorkovsky** and **Pussy Riot's Nadezhda Tolokonnikova** and **Maria Alyokhina** as well as Green Peace activists and others.

"It is not possible to rejoice for the liberation of the activists because this does not mean that the rule of law is being upheld, nor is this indicative of liberalisation in Russia".

She described the current crackdown on NGOs as an "unprecedented" one that "looks set to continue as Russian authorities are looking to divert public discontent away from themselves by presenting NGOs and LGBTI people as obstructive forces and enemies of the nation".

"Once the Sochi Olympic games are over and the world looks elsewhere, the Kremlin will actually tighten the thumbscrews", Ms Lokshina warned.

Mr Wanja Kilder, from the Hamburg-based NGO Quarteera, speaking on LGBTI rights pointed to the "homophobia being whipped out by President Putin to divert attention from corruption and public discontent with the government". He informed MEPs that many suicides are being committed amongst young LGBTI Russians because of the repression and attacks they are suffering. MEPs expressed concern at the treatment of gay people, condemned the foreign agent law and called for reflection on what should be done vis-a-vis the upcoming Sochi Olympic Games in Russia.

EU Special Representative for Human Rights Stavros Lambrinidis, addressing the DROI subcommittee on 23 January, said he expects to work closely with Russia towards resolving the existing conflicts between the foreign agent law and the LGBTI law, so that the Russian authorities are coherent with their own commitments including to the Council of Europe.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bIM-PRESS%2b20140120IPR33127%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN>

<http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/12/26/russia-foreign-agents-law-hits-hundreds-ngos-updated-december-26-2013>

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2013-0284&language=EN&ring=P7-RC-2013-0269>

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp/ht%3Cspan%20class='pullme'%3>

<http://rt.com/politics/russia-europe-human-rights-629/>

Lyudmila Alexeyeva interview - Moscow Helsinki Group will continue to go on with foreign grants

According to the 1999 Sakharov Prize Laureate, **Lyudmila Alexeyeva**, the Moscow Helsinki Group - of which she is a founding member - will continue without grants from abroad due to the law on foreign-sponsored non-governmental organizations instated earlier this year in Russia. **Ms Alexeyeva** said that the money received from foreign sponsors was far larger than what the Group is currently receiving from the Kremlin, but nevertheless, "we are not through

with anyone or anything. It's just that we do not apply for grants from foreign organizations," she said.

Ms Alexeyeva reiterated the group's determination to continue working for human rights in Russia and "do our job the way it is supposed to be done."

<http://www.interfax.com/newsinf.asp?id=472209>

Malala Yousafzai's book launch blocked by local officials

An event launching a new memoir by 2013 Sakharov Laureate **Malala Yousafzai** was cancelled following strong opposition from provincial government. The event, which was due to take place in Peshawar on 28 January, could not go ahead due to what has been described as "direct intervention" by the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The government's actions have been condemned by 2005 Sakharov Prize Laureates **Reporters Without Borders**, who state, "We deplore this politically-motivated manoeuvre, which violated freedom of information."

Meanwhile, **Ms Yousafzai** paid tribute to Aitzaz Hassan, a teenager who was killed while stopping a suicide bomber from attacking a school in Hangu district, in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-25924990#TWEET1026398>

<http://en.rsfs.org/pakistan-malala-yousafzai-book-launch-30-01-2014,45807.html#>

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-133737-Malala-Yousafzai-praises-Hangu-hero-Aitzaz-Hassan>

Sakharov Laureate and nominees nominated for Nobel Peace Prize

Malala Yousafzai (2013 Sakharov Prize Laureate), **Ales Bialiatski** and **Edward Snowden** (2013 Sakharov Prize nominees) have all been nominated for the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize.

Ms Yousafzai was nominated by MPs from Norway's Labor Party, who praised her "brave support for girls' right to education".

Support for **Mr Bialiatski's** nomination came from over 160 Polish MPs. It is the third time he has been nominated for the award.

Mr Snowden, 2013 Sakharov Prize nominee, was nominated by two socialist members of the Norwegian parliament, who argued that "the public debate and changes in policy that have followed in the wake of **Snowden's** whistleblowing have contributed to a more stable and peaceful world order."

<http://www.charter97.org/en/news/2014/1/17/84101/>

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-01-29/snowden-nominated-by-norwegian-lawmakers-for-nobel-peace-prize.html>

European Parliament committee approves Edward Snowden hearing

The European Parliament's Civil Liberties Committee has voted in favour of a hearing featuring testimony by **Edward Snowden**. **Mr Snowden**, who was nominated for the Sakharov Prize in 2013, is the former US National security Agency (NSA) employee who released secret documents revealing widespread global surveillance on internet and phone traffic. Among the alleged targets of surveillance are the German Chancellor Angela Merkel and communications within EU institutions.

The European Parliament will now vote on the recommendation of the Committee in February, and if approved, the hearing will take place in April 2013.

Mr Snowden will be able to participate through video conferencing from Russia, where he has found asylum.

http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=157100

<http://news.yahoo.com/european-parliament-committee-approves-snowden-hearing-102156748.html>

Hu Jia released after 24 hours as activist Xu Zhiyong is sentenced to four years in prison

Hu Jia, the 2008 Sakharov Prize Laureate, returned home 24 hours after being arrested by Chinese authorities on the night of 26 January due to alleged disturbance of the public order. However, **Mr Hu** remains under house arrest.

Mr Hu told New Tang Dynasty Television (NTD) that the police officers who escorted him home clearly indicated that his case is still under preliminary investigation. It is likely that he will once again be summoned by the state security police. **Mr Hu** said that the next step might be further detention, or even a prison sentence.

The Sakharov Laureate said that the authorities told him that this first detention was a warning sign. He was warned that his activities are being monitored by the Chinese police and that all the documents gathered during his detention are evidence that can be used to arrest him: "I was sentenced with the crime of 'inciting subversion of state power'. If I am sentenced again with that crime, it will be the second time. This will be more than 11 years in prison. After that, I will continue to do what I should do."

<http://www.ntd.tv/en/China%20Forbidden%20News/20140128/86585-hu-jia-under-house-arrest-threat-of-summons-after-chinese-new-year.html#sthash.qPl6NCxs.dpuf>

Statements by the President of the European Parliament

President Martin Schulz on the death of Nelson Mandela

Commenting on the passing of **Nelson Mandela**, South Africa's first black president and 1988 Sakharov Prize Laureate, President of the European Parliament **Martin Schulz** stated:

"South Africa today loses its father, the world loses a hero. I pay tribute to one of the greatest humans of our time.

***Nelson Mandela** dies today, but his legacy will last forever. He has been a fighter, a leader and a source of inspiration for so many people throughout Africa, Europe and the entire world.*

*My thoughts and condolences go out to **Nelson Mandela's** immediate family and friends."*

See link below for **President Schulz's** full statement:

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/the-president/fr-en/press/press_release_speeches/press_release/2013/2013-december/html/schulz-on-the-death-on-nelson-mandela

President Martin Schulz on Human Rights Day

Commenting on the passing of Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first black president and 1988 Sakharov Prize Laureate, **President Schulz** stated:

"Whether we look at our Sakharov Prize or our funding for human rights actions in the EU budget, the inclusion of human rights clauses in trade agreements or the creation of the post of EU Special Representative (EUSR) for Human Rights, the European Parliament has always strived to set an ambitious human rights agenda for the European Union.

"On this day, and on the 20th anniversary of the creation of the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, I pay tribute to all the workers and volunteers in international organisations and civil society who strive to advance the cause of human rights, in Europe and beyond."

See link below for **President Schulz's** full statement.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/the-president/fr-en/press/press_release_speeches/press_release/2013/2013-december/html/schulz-on-human-rights-day

European Union Human Rights Resolutions November-January 2013

Bangladesh: human rights and forthcoming elections

Parliament has expressed its serious concern over the continuing paralysis of everyday life in Bangladesh. So far some 30 Bangladeshis have been killed, and hundreds wounded, in political violence as a result of general strikes ('hartals') called for by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). These shutdowns have led to five senior opposition leaders being arrested by the government, along with – according to BNP sources – the arrest of approximately 1,000 BNP followers in rural areas.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0516+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

The situation of rights defenders and opposition activists in Cambodia and Laos

Cambodia

Parliament has extended its condolences to the families of the victims of 3 January 2014 peaceful demonstrations of textile industry workers that turned violent. Parliament calls on the Cambodian authorities to exercise restraint towards protestors and recalls that any use of force by officials must be subject to the principles of legality, necessity and proportionality.

Laos

Parliament has requested the Lao Government to clarify the state of the investigation into the whereabouts of Sombath Somphone, to answer the many outstanding questions around Sombath's disappearance, and to seek and accept assistance from foreign forensic and law enforcement experts. Sombath Somphone is a human rights and environmental rights activist and civil society leader who was allegedly the victim of an enforced disappearance on 15 December 2012 in Vientiane.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2014-0044+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

Recent elections in Bangladesh

Parliament has called on the Government of Bangladesh to immediately halt all repressive methods used by the security forces and to release the opposition politicians who have been subjected to arbitrary arrest. 2013 has reportedly been the most violent year in post-independence Bangladesh's history with killings and widespread violence erupting throughout the country in the run-up to and during the 5 January 2014 elections.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2014-0045+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

Recent moves to criminalise lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people

Parliament has condemned the adoption of ever more repressive laws against LGBTI people and underlined the fact that LGBTI equality is an undeniable element of fundamental human rights. 78 countries continue to consider consensual activities between adults of the same sex to be a crime although these legal restrictions are outdated in light of the overall mainstreaming of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) rights over recent decades.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2014-0046+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

Bangladesh: human rights and forthcoming elections

Parliament has expressed its serious concern over the continuing paralysis of everyday life in Bangladesh. So far some 30 Bangladeshis have been killed, and hundreds wounded, in political violence as a result of general strikes ('hartals') called for by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). These shutdowns have led to five senior opposition leaders being arrested by the government, along with – according to BNP sources – the arrest of approximately 1,000 BNP followers in rural areas.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0516+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

Qatar: situation of migrant workers

Parliament is worried about the situation of migrant workers in Qatar and has called on the Qatari authorities to effectively implement existing legislation in this field. Qatar has the highest ratio of migrant workers to domestic population in the world, nearly 90 % of the country's workforce being of foreign origin. Each year, an average of 400 workers coming from India and Nepal die in Qatar. An increase in numbers is expected for the 2022 World Cup.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0517+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

Fair justice in Bolivia, in particular the cases of Előd Tóásó and Mario Tadić

Parliament has called on the Bolivian authorities to ensure a fair and independent trial in the cases of Előd Tóásó and Mario Tadić and calls for an independent investigation, involving international experts, into the deaths of Árpád Magyarósi, Michael Martin Dwyer and Eduardo Rózsa-Flores. It is alleged that the basic human rights of Előd Tóásó and Mario Tadić have been breached, both on their arrest and during the criminal proceedings.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0518+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

Situation in the Central African Republic

Parliament has condemned the serious violations of humanitarian and of human rights law, notably by former Séléka and militia groups, both in the capital and in the provinces. The breakdown of public order and security in the CAR is causing a humanitarian disaster and also poses a significant threat to regional security, to which military intervention cannot be the sole solution.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0602+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

Organ harvesting in China

Parliament has expressed its deep concern over the persistent and credible reports of systematic, state-sanctioned organ harvesting from non-consenting prisoners of conscience in the People's Republic of China and calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to end immediately the practice of harvesting organs from prisoners of conscience and members of religious and ethnic minority groups. In 1984 China implemented regulations that permitted the harvesting of organs from executed prisoners, without the necessity of acceptance.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0603+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

Situation in Sri Lanka

In 2009 the decades-long conflict between the Sri Lankan Government and the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) came to an end with the defeat and surrender of the latter and the death of their leader. Parliament has however noted with concern that the presence of government military forces in the former conflict areas remains considerable, leading to human rights violations, and expresses considerable concern at the continuing reports of intimidation and human rights violations.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0604+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>