

**EP SAKHAROV PRIZE NETWORK
NEWSLETTER
June 2014**

ALES BIALIATSKI GIVEN OVATION IN EP PLENARY

02-07-2014: EP President and Sakharov Network co-Chair Martin Schulz welcomed Belarusian human rights defender and 2012 and 2013 Sakharov Prize Nominee Ales Bialiatski to the first plenary session of the 2014-2019 legislature, reminding applauding MEPs that "this House has on a number of occasions demanded Mr Bialiatski's release". Ales Bialiatski was released on 21st June after nearly three years in prison. He met President Schulz privately to discuss human rights and civil society in Belarus, noting that NGOs are now better organised and stating these need to work for change at the grassroots level, given the already pre-determined nature of 2015 government elections. At a press conference hosted by MEP Andrzej Grzyb, Mr Bialiatski said: "I'd like to express my gratitude to the EU who continued to demand the release of Belarusian political prisoners; my release came as a surprise but shows the importance of sustained political pressure".

Link: <http://spring96.org/en/news/71878> ; <http://spring96.org/en/news/71872>;
<http://bit.ly/1sytaaa>; <http://bit.ly/1qrJeGu>; <http://bit.ly/1pu7oio>;

Berta Soler at the European Parliament: "Nothing has changed in Cuba"

03-07-2014: 2005 Sakharov Prize Laureates "Ladies in White" leader Berta Soler stressed that "the situation in Cuba right now is really awful" and that "nothing has changed". She told a meeting organised by the European People's Party that every week members of the Ladies in White are arrested and beaten, while two are currently political prisoners, and believes that for the EU "the first thing to do is to demand that human rights are respected - all trade agreements need to make sure that this basic demand is in place".

In June, for the 22nd week in a row, 27 activists from 2010 SP Laureate Guillermo Fariñas's group UNPACU were reportedly arrested in Santa Clara. Mr Fariñas believes he might be confined to a psychiatric hospital and has received death threats. SP Laureate 2005, Reporters Without Borders said: "although the Castro regime gives the appearance of opening up politically, the methods used by the authorities to silence dissident journalists are clearly becoming more and more brutal". Links: <http://bit.ly/1njt3bs>; <http://hrlid.us/STnFT4>; <http://bit.ly/1vQUOgS>; <http://bit.ly/T6SHah>;
<http://bit.ly/1njt3bs>; <http://bit.ly/1kwvWaw>;

President Schulz and Asmaa Mahfouz express alarm over 15 year sentence for Alaa Abdel Fattah

12-06-2014: EP President Martin Schulz tweeted he is "disconcerted by news of 15 year prison sentence for Abdel Fattah blogger, symbol of human rights and 2011 democratic uprising in #Egypt". Asmaa Mahfouz, the 2011 Sakharov Prize Laureate, has also expressed alarm over the 15 year prison sentence imposed on Alaa Abdel Fattah, a prominent figure in the 2011 uprising who has been charged under new laws banning demonstrations. He was sentenced in absentia to 15 years in prison, along with twenty others. Asmaa Mahfouz commented on Twitter: "Fifteen years for protesting? What about those who killed?" Links: <http://ab.co/1loEmAW>; <http://bit.ly/1rHAgRj>

Razan Zaitouneh: John Kerry calls for her release, Hillary Clinton honours her

13-06-2014: US Secretary of State John Kerry announced a renewed effort to release Razan Zaitouneh, the 2011 Sakharov Prize Laureate: "Human rights defenders like abducted Syrian activist Razan Zaitouneh, are especially on our minds. Razan has risked her life inside Syria to care for political prisoners and call attention to human rights violations, including against women. We stand in awe of her leadership and heroism. And again today, I call for her release and the release of

thousands of human rights defenders around the world". In addition Ms Zaitouneh received an award, in absentia from the NGO Vital Voices on June 17th, presented by Hillary Clinton, who said: "Let us raise our voices as one and demand the safe and immediate release of Razan Zaitouneh".

Links: <http://bit.ly/Uaxl7r>; <http://bit.ly/1kRkuBS>

Hu Jia goes to Tiananmen after release from house arrest

12-06-14: Hu Jia, 2008 Sakharov Prize Laureate, was released from house arrest and afterwards went to Tiananmen dressed in black, although he is still being monitored. Link: <http://bit.ly/1kNouna>

Nasrin Sotoudeh alerts EP about escalation in pressure on activists, and vows never to leave Iran

20-06-2014: Nasrin Sotoudeh, the Iranian 2012 Laureate reports that "A new wave of pressure on civil and political activists has started. The brutal attack in Ward 350 of Evin prison, summoning and arresting civil activists and journalists, and the execution of Gholamreza Khosrawi, despite the protests of human rights defenders inside Iran and at the international level against it, are all concrete examples of such a judicial attack". In an interview, commenting on activists who have left Iran, Ms Sotoudeh said: "wherever they are, they are working for the sake of this Iran. But it would have been better for the country if they had stayed and fought. I will never leave". Links: <http://bit.ly/1qDjvfk>; <http://bit.ly/1odCKHS>; <http://bit.ly/1jCurDG>; <http://huff.to/1mWj4M1>

Reporters Without Borders condemns sentences handed down to Egyptian journalists and welcomes UN Panel Debate on journalists' safety

5-06-2014: RWB, 2005 Laureates, wrote an open letter to Egypt's new President Al-Sisi calling for guarantees for freedom of the press and information, and to free all detained journalists. On 23 June the group condemned heavy sentences ranging from 7 to 10 years handed down to three Al Jazeera journalists. The group also welcomed the UN Human Rights Council's debate on journalists' safety on 11th June, and made recommendations to the EU to support refugee journalists "forced to flee their homes for fear of violent retaliation or imprisonment for their work", and to: "increase UN resettlement quotas and ensure faster processing of refugee journalists' cases". Links: <http://bit.ly/1jyv5lv>; <http://bit.ly/1ITZdfV>; <http://bit.ly/1IEGIks>; <http://bit.ly/TrdHbY>

Nurit Peled Elhanan draws attention to human rights violations in Palestine

04-07-2014: 2001 Laureate, Nurit Peled Elhanan has drawn the European Parliament's attention to the background of the killing of Israeli and Palestinian teenagers. She has denounced Israeli forces "for 12 hours trying to force the father of Mohammed Abu Khdeir to issue a statement it was a family killing on account of his son being gay". It is widely believed that Khdeir was murdered in a revenge attack after the discovery of the bodies of three murdered Israeli teenagers Naftali Frenkel, Gilad Shaar and Eyal Yifrach. Ms Peled has also called attention to the case of Uriel Ferrera, 18, who is serving a third prison term "for refusing to be drafted to the Israeli Occupation Army. Since he is a very orthodox Jew, he is being harassed and mocked in prison for his faith, and receives immeasurable punishments". Ms Peled stated "I believe this case of Zionist anti-Semitism should concern people who care for human rights". Links: <http://bit.ly/1mpxW51>

Briefs:

Malala Yousafzai, the 2013 Laureate, has recounted her personal refugee story for a UNHCR campaign ahead of World Refugee Day on June 20th. - She has also been awarded the 2014 Hope for Children Award, and the Global Partnership for Education has also announced that she will be one of their ambassadors. Links: <http://bit.ly/1vQYG1m>; <http://bit.ly/1plePWW>; <http://bit.ly/1lCwdV0>

Kofi Annan, the 2003 Laureate, believes "the new Palestinian government offers hope: hope of a road to renewed and united leadership". - The West Africa Commission on Drugs, led by Mr Annan,

has pronounced itself for the decriminalisation of drugs in West Africa. - To resolve conflicts in Iraq and Syria, Mr Annan called for a core group of countries to work together, made up of permanent members of the UN Security Council such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey and possibly Egypt. Links: <http://bit.ly/1kNoTpu>; <http://aje.me/SYquSU>; <http://bbc.in/1oFnhXg>

Hauwa Ibrahim, 2005 Laureate, has told a US Senate Committee that "the United States has the full capability of combatting the recent rising tide of violence against women both domestically and internationally" and urged the US to ratify the CEDAW. - At the WANA Forum in Jordan gathering policy makers from 17 countries, Ms Ibrahim provided insights about how women could secure access to justice through Islamic law by leveraging local traditions. Links: <http://bit.ly/T6TPL1>; <http://bit.ly/1lseyQj>

Oleg Orlov, the 2009 Laureate of Memorial, has travelled to Eastern Ukraine to collect evidence of abductions saying that: "the practice we have seen in eastern Ukraine can be compared to the cases of abductions that we documented for decades during two wars in Chechnya"; and on the self-proclaimed "Donetsk People's Republic": "we urge DNR to release abducted people kept at the seized building of the Donetsk regional administration right now".

Nadezhda Tolokonnikova of 2013 Sakharov Prize nominee **Pussy Riot**, has submitted an appeal to the Russian Constitutional Court seeking a revision of Article 213 of the Russian Criminal Code on hooliganism, on the basis that it runs counter to provisions of the Constitution.

Veteran rights activist and 2009 Laureate **Lyudmila Alexeyeva**, who holds US citizenship, was singled out in the media, as Russia has introduced legislation that makes failing to declare dual citizenship or foreign residency a crime punishable by fines or community service. Memorial's Svetlana Gannushkina commented to Newsweek that persons with dual-citizenship are suspected of disloyalty by default.

Eskinder Nega, the 2013 Sakharov Prize nominee, has been awarded the Golden Pen of Freedom as an emblem of Ethiopia's struggle and a symbol of solidarity with jailed journalists around the world by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers.

Bernard Ntaganda a 2012 Sakharov Prize nominee and one of Rwanda's most prominent opposition figures, vowed on the 4th June to return to politics, after being released at the end of a four-year prison sentence for threatening state security.

Lawyers of **Dawit Isaak**, 2009 Sakharov Prize nominee, have reported the Eritrean president to Swedish police for human rights crimes.

The Sakharov Prize Network 2013 Conference included a session on the **European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights**. Here are a few interesting examples of EIDHR work linked to the 2014 Football World Cup: <http://bit.ly/1IMN7Rs>.