

SAKHAROV PRIZE NETWORK NEWSLETTER 01/2017

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTS NEW PRESIDENT AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Antonio Tajani (European People's Party - EPP/Italy) was elected in January as the President of the European Parliament. He also takes over the co-Chair of the Sakharov Prize Network from his predecessor **Martin Schulz** (Socialists & Democrats - S&D/Germany). **David McAllister** (EPP/Germany) was elected to chair the Foreign Affairs committee. He succeeds **Elmar Brok** (EPP/Germany). **Pier Antonio Panzeri** (S&D/Italy) replaces **Elena Valenciano** (S&D/Spain) as Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights. **Linda McAvan** (S&D/UK) was re-elected as Chair of the Development Committee. They will represent the European Parliament as members of the Sakharov Prize Network for the next two and a half years. Link: [European Parliament](#)

Nadia Murad urges the UN Security Council to end Yazidi genocide

20-12-2016: Sakharov Prize Laureate 2016 **Nadia Murad** urged a special session of the UN Security Council to act in order to end the Yazidi genocide and to ensure perpetrators are brought to justice. She called on the Prime Minister of Iraq to request the Security Council to establish a special commission to investigate war crimes against humanity across the country. On 13 January the Laureate visited Barcelona to start her new campaign to raise awareness and to support victims of human trafficking. After giving a speech at the Provincial Council of the city she met the Barcelona FC Management "to make football a platform for supporting victims of trafficking and minorities in danger". Link: [Rudaw, Kurdistan24](#)

Dr Denis Mukwege among the most influential people in the world

03-01-2017: Sakharov Prize Laureate 2014 **Dr Denis Mukwege** received the pan-African media's first Personality of the Year award in 2016. He was also recently named in the TIME Magazine list of most influential people in the world. Link: [Africanews](#)

Malala statement on Syria: "Prayers are not enough"

14-12-2016: Sakharov Prize Laureate 2013 **Malala Yousafzai** released a statement urging the international community to act to end the atrocities perpetrated against civilians in Aleppo by pro-Syrian government forces. "Prayers are not enough", she stated, "we must act". The international community "must do everything they can to end this inhumane war. The Syrian regime must give safe passage to people who want to leave and allow aid workers into Aleppo to save as many lives as they can." Link: [Time](#)

Hu Jia co-founds new Human Rights Accountability Centre

10-01-2017: Sakharov Prize Laureate 2008 **Hu Jia** was among the founders of a group of US based human rights activists that launched the China Human Rights Accountability Centre. The Centre is dedicated to collecting data on officials that have or continue to violate human rights in China. Hu participated in this initiative despite the risk of potentially causing irritation with the Chinese Communist Party. Link: [RadioFreeAsia](#)

Fading memory of Argentina's dictatorship

24-01-17: Sakharov Prize Laureate 1992 **Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo** described the decision of the government of Mauricio Macri to turn Memory Day into a movable holiday as a "provocation" reminiscent of the dictatorship. Every year on 24 March, mass marches are held in Buenos Aires and in several cities of the country, in memory of the victims of the last dictatorship and renew a claim for justice. President of the Las Madres group, Estela Carlotta, recalled that Memory Day is a date that marked the lives of 30,000 persons who disappeared without account. Link: [ElTelegrafo](#)

Guillermo Fariñas on shift in US migration policy

13-01-2017: Sakharov Prize Laureate 2010 **Guillermo Fariñas** remarked on the end of the policy known as “Dry Feet, Wet Feet” that permitted Cubans to obtain automatic and permanent residence in the US. Fariñas noted that the US Government must respect the suffering of Cuban citizens and the Declaration of Human Rights, that every human being has the right to travel and mobility with freedom. He encouraged Cuban citizens to join human rights groups to create the necessary conditions to immigrate to other countries. Link: [RFI](#)

Ladies in White - arrests continue in Cuba

15-12-2016: **Berta Soler**, President of the 2005 Sakharov Laureate **Ladies in White**, was arrested on the 15th of December as she was stepping out of her house, which also stands as the headquarters of the group. According to witnesses she was not engaging in any objectionable activity upon her detention. Cubanet reported that Soler’s husband was forcibly restrained from intervening during the arrest. The Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation reported that Mrs Soler was arrested three times in November only. The activist was eventually released after 25 hours of detention. **36 Damas de Blanco and other human rights activists** were also arrested on Sunday 22 January in several Cuban cities, while the police siege continues against members of Unión Patriótica de Cuba (UNPACU) and the Movement of Dignity in Santiago de Cuba. Link: [Breitbart Martinoticias](#)

Threats on journalists in high risk areas

17-12-2016: 2005 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Reporters Without Borders (RSF)** called for the protection of journalists working in high risk areas. Specific cases in **Syria, Belarus and Bulgaria** are highlighted. According to an official report published by RSF, most of the 74 journalists dead in 2016 were deliberately targeted. Syria, where 19 were killed, topped the list for the deadliest country for journalists. Link: [Telegraph](#) , [OCCRP](#), [Kyvpost](#), [BroadcastingCable](#)

RSF concerned over the Trump’s attacks on the media

23-01-2017: **Reporters Without Borders have recently expressed concern over the Trump administration’s attacks on the media** within its first days of taking office. “The press freedom predators of the world are watching Trump and taking notes,” remarked Delphine Halgand, director of RSF North America. She added that “it’s terrifying to think how much more brazen they will be in their attacks on journalists around the world now that the leader of the United States of America is setting a terrible example.” Link: [CommonDreams](#)

Turkey cracks down on Can Dündar’s new media platform

26-01-2017: **Turkey has blocked a new online news platform led by 2016 Sakharov Prize Finalist Can Dündar**. The new Turkish-German online medium Özgürüz (We are free) was blocked in Turkey only two days after its launch. Editor in-chief Can Dündar who initially praised Özgürüz as the return of investigative journalism reacted cynically tweeting “I was already wondering when this would happen”. In terms of press freedom, Reporters Without Borders ranked Turkey currently 151 out of 180 countries. Hundreds of media were closed after the putsch in July and over hundred journalists imprisoned. Link: [Spiegel](#)

EP URGENCY RESOLUTIONS

19-01-2017: In three resolutions during the January Plenary, the European Parliament has condemned the growing intolerance towards ethnic, religious and sexual minorities in [Indonesia](#), in addition to the attacks against peacekeepers in the [Central African Republic](#), and human rights breaches in [Burundi](#). Link: [EP](#)

05-01-2017: The European Parliament also condemned the demolition of the [Larung Gar Tibetan Buddhist Academy](#), the [imprisonment of scholar Ilham Tohti by Chinese authorities](#) and [the persecution of the Rohingya minority in Myanmar](#), while urging the protection of [mass graves in Iraq](#), in three resolutions voted on Thursday 15 December 2016. Link: [EP](#)