

**EP SAKHAROV PRIZE NETWORK
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DR DENIS MUKWEGE AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

25-03-2015: At the European Parliament, **Dr Denis Mukwege, Sakharov Prize Laureate in 2014**, had bilateral meetings with President Martin Schulz and with the Chairman of the S&D Group, Gianni Pittella. He participated, as a guest speaker, in a meeting of the Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) co-chaired by Elena Valenciano, DROI Chair, and Louis Michel, Chair of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly. In his address, the 2014 Sakharov Prize Laureate highlighted the issue of mass sexual abuses and pre-electoral climate in the DRC. At the end of Dr Mukwege's visit to the European Parliament, a documentary film on his work in the Panzi Hospital entitled "*L'Homme qui repare les femmes: la colère d'Hippocrate*" was screened in a Brussels cinema in his presence and to a full house. In the Eastern region of the DRC, where the hospital is based, the army has been fighting rival militia groups for the control of the region's mineral wealth, and mass sexual assaults are undertaken in order to terrorize the local population. The documentary was screened also on the occasion of the 2015 Edition of African Film Festival of Cordoba in March 2015.

The Chair of DROI, Elena Valenciano, announced that the S&D Group will pay a visit to the DRC from 7 to 12 April 2015 in order to "put the spotlight on the situation of Dr Mukwege himself and also on the situation of women and children in the DRC". Links: [Subcommittee on Human Rights](#); [QuePasa](#); [FCAT](#); [CongoForum](#)

EP President Martin Schulz visits China to celebrate the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations

18-03-2015: President Schulz met Chinese President Xi Jinping to discuss and foster the economic relationship between the EU and China and human rights standards on a recent visit to China. President Schulz said that the EU respected the Chinese views on the basis of Chinese traditions and culture, and in return he insisted that also China is requested to commit to debates on human rights standards with EU institutions: "I asked for a deepening of discussions on individual rights and the guarantee of human rights. We should continue the debate and discussion even if we agree that we have different approaches", he said. Afterwards, he was invited to deliver a speech at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, where he emphasised "coordination, cooperation and compromise" as the keys to success in managing bilateral relations, and the importance of human rights dialogue as a "sign of mature relationship and mutual respect". Link: [EP President](#)

Hu Jia expresses concerns on the new Chinese draft counterterrorism law

10-03-2015: In an interview with the Washington Post, 2008 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Hu Jia** criticized the new Chinese draft counterterrorism law as a new attempt by the government to exploit the terrorist threat to further empower its repressive state security apparatus. The law establishes a new counterterrorism body that would have the power to designate organizations and members as terrorist without any protection of due process. Hu Jia said "the law might appeal to people angry at terrorist attacks, but it is fundamentally designed to extend a comprehensive system of control introduced by President Xi. Further, he added that "government controls propaganda, if they say you are terrorist, then you are". The new law has been called by Human Rights Watch a "recipe for abuse". Links: [Washington Post](#); [Intellasia](#); [Human Rights Watch](#)

The visit of Ladies in White to Brussels

03/04-03-2015: **Ladies in White** Berta Soler and Elena Larrinaga, together with three Cuban dissidents, visited the European Parliament and met Vice-President Ulrike Lunacek, Friends of Cuba

Intergroup and other MEPs. Discussions focused on the thaw in relations between Cuba and the USA, the third round of negotiations on the Bilateral Agreement between the EU and Cuba, the need for legitimacy of the civil society in Cuba, the overdue modernisation of the Cuban society, in particular the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the desperate search of the Cuban government for international financial assistance in order to strengthen its grip on power, while disregarding the need for democratic reforms. The Cuban guests had a lengthy discussion on the EU-Cuba Bilateral Agreement at the EEAS (facilitated by the EP). They stressed that the Chinese model is the one preferred by the Castro regime: a capitalist economy in a communist political system.

Re-elected Ladies in White's leader accuses the Cuban government of manipulating the conflicts within the organization

20-03-2015: Despite criticisms from some group members, the leadership of Berta Soler of the 2005 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Ladies of White** has been confirmed through an internal referendum. The internal opposition group had challenged her leadership for abusing her authority after the expulsion of a group member in the latest inner division. However, Soler said to see the government's hand behind the conflict as the government intends to "discredit and break the Ladies in White, promote discord among the women in the group and encourage some to leave".

Links: [Yahoo News](#); [El Nuevo Herald](#); [Fox News](#)

Aung San Suu Kyi's party to run in Myanmar vote for presidency even if she cannot be president

19-03-2015: Democratic reforms in Myanmar are stalling in the run-up to the general election expected for the end of this year. Myanmar opposition will take part in the election even though there is no change in the Constitution to allow 1990 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Aung San Suu Kyi** to become president due to her two sons' foreign citizenship. Aung San Suu Kyi met Myanmar President Thein Sein on 2 March and discussed the constitutional law which currently poses restrictions on the NLD leader from contesting the presidency. However, the President expressed his reluctance on constitutional changes and the diminishing of the role of the military in the political life of Myanmar. Ms Suu Kyi's claim for constitutional amendments comes up alongside the last student protests which have been rippling across the country for three months on their demand of more democracy and the right to education. Following the violent crackdown against the protesters, the NLD leader Suu Kyi called for an inquiry commission to investigate "whether police acted in line with the law, and its findings be submitted to the president by 31 March". The EU, which has run training programmes for Myanmar's police force, issued a statement voicing concern about the use of force by the local law enforcement officers. Links: [Reuters](#); [Irrawaddy](#); [Voice of America](#); [DailyMail](#); [BBC](#)

Memorial's leader Oleg Orlov on Boris Nemtsov's assassination

17-03-2015: In a recent statement, **Oleg Orlov**, one of the leaders of **Memorial**, Sakharov Prize Laureate in 2009, accused Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov of being one of the most likely people responsible for the assassination of Boris Nemtsov. He wrote on Memorial's website "the trail left by people close to the leadership of the Chechen Republic is, to a greater or lesser degree of conspicuousness, visible in a whole series of assassinations of the opponents of Ramzan Kadyrov: Movladi, Ruslan Yamadaev, Sulim Yamadaev, Umar Israilov, and Nemtsov as well". The European Parliament adopted an urgency resolution on Nemtsov's killing calling it one of the most significant "unresolved politically motivated murders and suspicious deaths perpetrated in Russia since 1998". Link: [Boris Nemtsov](#); [RightsinRussia](#)

Reporters without Borders shocked by the murder of the leading Yemeni journalist Abdul Karim Mohammed al-Khaiwani

18-03-2015: **Reporters without Borders** expressed their sadness at the murder of the Yemeni

journalist and human rights defender Abdul Karim Mohammed al-Khaiwani, former editor of Al-Shoura, a pro-democracy newspaper closed down in 2005, and winner of Amnesty International UK's Special Award for Human Rights Journalism under Threat in 2008. Link: [RWB](#)

Leyla Zana will run for the upcoming parliamentary election

07-03-2015: The 1995 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Leyla Zana** became a member of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) and will run for the upcoming parliamentary elections to be held on 7 June. Furthermore, she is playing a key role in the settlement process launched by Ocalan at the end of 2012 to solve the terrorism-related dispute between Turkey and the Kurds. As member of a delegation made up of pro-Kurdish politicians and HDP, she is regularly visiting the leader of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) Ocalan, still jailed at the Imrali prison. During a recent mission, Leyla Zana also visited KRG officials in Arbil and PKK senior members in the Kandil Mountains in northern Iraq to convey Öcalan's messages to Massoud Barzani, the president of the Kurdistan region in Iraq, on general matters regarding the Kurds and Kurdistan issue. Links: [TodaysZaman](#); [KurdishQuestion](#)

Nurit Peled-Elhanan calls inter-religious electoral list "a ray of hope" in Israel

25-03-2015: Speaking at the International Social Forum in Tunisia, Israeli 2001 Sakharov Prize Laureate and co-initiator of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine, **Nurit Peled-Elhanan** deplored the propaganda inciting fear and hatred that, she said, led to the recent electoral result in Israel, with Benjamin Netanyahu being returned to power. "However, in this bleak picture we do have a ray of hope, a gleam of the regional spring in the shape of the joint list of Muslim, Christian and Jews, pious, nationalists and communists that have come together and became the third biggest party in Israel. These people, who put aside their differences in order to commit themselves to democracy, to human rights and equality, are the first blossom of our spring," Ms Peled said, recalling the daring exploit of her father, Matti Peled, who travelled to Tunisia 42 years ago "disguised as a woman, with a false French passport to meet Yassar Arafat and to start talking about peace". "Unfortunately neither my father's efforts nor the Arab Spring have pierced the iron mental walls of Israel," the Sakharov Laureate said. Link: [Russell Tribunal on Palestine](#)

Madres de Plaza de Mayo demand Milani probe at the 39th military coup commemoration march

23-03-2015: During the march for the 31st anniversary of the last military coup, **Hebe de Bonafini**, leader of **Madres de Plaza de Mayo**, expressed the organization's support to Kirchner for the next presidential elections to be held in October 2015. On the occasion of the march, the organisation requested the courts to investigate Army chief César Milani for his alleged involvement in crimes against humanity during the 1976-1983 dictatorship. The movement was awarded with the Sakharov Prize in 1992 for its struggle for thrust against the crimes committed by the military regime during Argentina's Dirty War. Links: [Buenos Aires Herald](#); [TodoNoticias](#)

Malala Yousafzai funds a war-damaged school in Gaza

23-03-2015: The 2013 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Malala Yousafzai** has channelled 50,000 dollars through the UNRWA agency for the reopening of a school damaged by the recent summer conflict in the Gaza strip. She said: "The needs are overwhelming – more than half of Gaza's population is under 18 years of age. They want and deserve quality education, hope and real opportunities to build a future". Links: [The Guardian](#); [Time](#)

Oslobodjenje reporter Gordana Katana verbally insulted by the Bosnian Serb leader Milora Dodik

17-03-2015: Gordana Katana, reporter of the 1993 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Oslobodjenje**, has been victim of hate speech by Milorad Dodik, the Bosnian Serb leader. At a press conference held on 14 March in Banja Luka, after a session of the SNSD board, Milorad Dodik, in 'a vulgar, nationalistic and male chauvinistic way' - as reported by Oslobodjenje - reacted to legitimate reporters' questions

about events in the party, as well as the avoidance of a three-year prison sentence and escape from RS of Mile Radisic, a local tycoon and close friend of Dodik's. Link: [Oslobodjenje](#)

Latest European Parliament resolutions on human rights

12-03-2015: During the plenary session in March, the EP adopted four urgency resolutions. Ahead of the continuous atrocities perpetrated by [ISIS](#), MEPs declared ISIS responsible of "crime against humanity", and called on EU Member States to support the military actions against ISIS coordinated by the United States. MEPs further expressed deep concerns on the recruitment of child soldier in [South Sudan](#), and urged all parties to the conflict to immediately and unconditionally "stop human rights violations and to form a transitional government of national unity". The third urgent resolution addressed the issue of "the illegal displacement of local [Massai](#) communities" by Tanzanian government, whereby the EP called on the Tanzanian Government to uphold all the international legal obligations on indigenous rights and customary land law. In its fourth resolution the EP deplored [Boris Nemtsov](#)'s assassination and the deteriorating human rights situation in Russia where "democratic and fundamental values are presented as being alien to Russian society". The EP called on the Russian authorities as a matter of urgency to release Nadia Savchenko, member of the Ukrainian Parliament and delegate to PACE, "who is illegally detained in a Russian jail".

Link: [EP](#)