

**EP SAKHAROV PRIZE NETWORK
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Aung San Suu Kyi, 1990 Sakharov Laureate, visits Strasbourg to receive Prize



On 22 October, **Aung San Suu Kyi** was finally able to receive the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in person - 23 years after it was awarded to her by the European Parliament.

Ms. Suu Kyi was unable to attend the ceremony in Strasbourg in 1990 as Burma's then-ruling military junta had placed her under house arrest, where she would remain for the greater part of the next two decades. **Ms. Suu Kyi** was finally released in 2010, as part of a process of democratic reform that has brought elections and a transition to civilian-led government.

Ms. Suu Kyi's long-awaited acceptance speech, which drew a standing ovation from the Parliament, touched upon her time as a political prisoner, as part of an impassioned defence of democratic values. She outlined her hope for a

Burma in which human rights are respected, and welcomed the steps already taken towards democracy.

However, she emphasised that Burma's transition remains far from complete. According to **Ms. Suu Kyi**, the current constitution, which ensures a privileged role for the military, must be reformed in order to guarantee the right of Burmese citizens to "live in accordance with their conscience", and to "shape their own destiny".

However, **Ms. Suu Kyi** also expressed her hope that the European Parliament, and the international community at large, will continue to aid the development of democracy in Burma, and thanked the European Parliament's longstanding support for her cause.

Ms. Suu Kyi concluded by stating her determination to create a society worthy of **Andrei Sakharov**, the Soviet political dissident in whose honour the Sakharov Prize was created.

Aung San Suu Kyi participates in exchange of views with MEPs

In Strasbourg 1990 Sakharov Laureate **Aung San Suu Kyi** participated in an exchange of views with MEPs at the meeting, which was held jointly by the **Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)**, the **Committee on Development (DEVE)** and the **Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI)**.

In a lively discussion, **Ms. Suu Kyi** placed particularly strong emphasis on the need for constitutional reform, as well as civil-military relations, economic development, national reconciliation and the resolution of ethnic and nationalist conflicts.

See link below for video footage of the event:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/committees/video?event=20131021-1800-COMMITTEE-AFET>

Aung San Suu Kyi meets with Pope Francis

On 28 October **Aung San Suu Kyi** met with Pope Francis. The Pope "expressed his appreciation for the opposition leader's non-violent engagement in the cause of peace and democracy". He also urged **Ms. Suu Kyi**, who has been accused of failing to do enough for Burma's ethnic and religious minorities, to encourage inter-religious dialogue in the country.

[http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2013/10/28/pope-francis-meets-with-myanmars-famed-dissident-aung-san-suu-kyi/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+TheRawStory+\(The+Raw+Story\)](http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2013/10/28/pope-francis-meets-with-myanmars-famed-dissident-aung-san-suu-kyi/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+TheRawStory+(The+Raw+Story))

<http://www.morungexpress.com/frontpage/105740.html>

Burma may release more political prisoners, according to government member

A member of the Burmese government has indicated that it may release more political prisoners within the coming days, as President Thein Sein seeks to fulfil his promise to release all prisoners of conscience by the end of the year.

Since the end of military rule in 2011, over 2,000 political prisoners, including opposition leader and Sakharov Prize Laureate **Aung San Suu Kyi**, are believed to have been released, bringing the number still detained down to around 150.

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/11/06/uk-myanmar-prisoners-idUKBRE9A50BU20131106>

Sakharov Prize Laureate Salima Ghezali and MEPs debate "Women in the Mediterranean Region"

On 24 October, the Sakharov Prize Network organised a conference in Marseille which brought together Sakharov Prize Laureate **Salima Ghezali** and **MEPs** to debate the topic of "Women in the Mediterranean Region".

This event was initiated by **Jean Roatta MEP, vice-chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights**, and represented an opportunity to exchange views on the status of women in each participant's region. The conference was followed by a public debate, in which around 70 people actively participated, between MEPs and **Ms. Ghezali**. **Ms. Ghezali** in her Sakharov Lecture had the opportunity to present her vision for the place and role of women in the countries of the Mediterranean region, particularly after the Arab Spring.

The discussion that followed the conference focused on the place of women in constitutional debates, migration policy and the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

Sakharov Laureates Guillermo Fariñas and Damas de Blanco among protesters beaten and detained in Cuba

The most frequent victims of the recent increase in violence and arbitrary detention in Cuba have been the **Damas de Blanco** (2005 Sakharov Laureates) and their pro-democracy ally **Guillermo Fariñas** (2010 Laureate).

On Sunday 3 October Cuban democracy activists, including members of the **Damas** and **Mr. Fariñas**, were yet again victims of brutal policing tactics. Around 30 **Damas** were arrested in various locations after attending mass. **Mr. Fariñas** went to a police station in Santa Clara to protest against the arbitrary detention of the **Damas**, and was beaten by a mob that he claims was organised by the Cuban government.

Numerous demonstrators were injured by security forces. **Leticia Ramos**, one of the **Damas'** regional leaders, was hospitalised. **Mr. Fariñas** also required medical attention after receiving a severe cut to the head and "around half a dozen" other wounds.

<http://www.elnuevoherald.com/2013/11/05/1607436/gobierno-cubano-detiene-a-30-damas.html> (Spanish)

<http://babalublog.com/2013/11/04/violent-repression-stains-another-sunday-in-cuba-with-blood/>

<http://iwpr.net/report-news/cubas-women-white-harassed-sunday-marches>

Increased repression in Cuba: over 900 politically motivated detentions in October

Cuban activists have informed the European Parliament that the Castro government has stepped up its campaign of repression against human rights defenders, both in terms of the number of arrests and the brutality of the manner in which the arrests are made. Various Cuban and international news sources have reported that there were over 900 politically motivated arrests in October alone. Meanwhile, police officers, forces of the Ministry of the Interior and government-orchestrated mobs have repeatedly subjected activists to savage beatings, resulting in severe injuries and numerous hospitalisations.

Sakharov Prize Laureates the **Damas de Blanco** and **Guillermo Fariñas** have publicly denounced the recent upsurge in repression.

<http://www.dw.de/denuncian-arrestos-masivos-en-cuba/a-17199598> (Spanish)

<http://babalublog.com/2013/11/04/violent-repression-stains-another-sunday-in-cuba-with-blood/>

<http://www.martinoticias.com/media/video/29011.html> (Spanish)

President Obama meets with Sakharov Prize Laureates Guillermo Fariñas and Berta Soler

On 8 November, President Barack Obama met with Cuban dissidents **Guillermo Fariñas** and **Damas de Blanco** leader **Berta Soler** (Sakharov Laureates 2010 and 2005).

At the event in Miami, President Obama offered encouragement to **Mr. Fariñas** and **Ms. Soler**, expressing his admiration for their sacrifices and claiming that he has begun to see changes in Cuba. He also listened to the views of the dissidents, who urged him to take a hard line on Cuba and to maintain strong U.S. sanctions against the Castro regime, and advised that any negotiations regarding the future of Cuba must include the democratic opposition.

Following the meeting, **Mr. Fariñas** said, "This has been a triumph for the entire opposition, above all for democracy in Cuba, for those who are on the island and those outside, those who died trying to get out and those who live outside."

Ms. Soler also had the opportunity to meet with other high-level U.S. government officials during a recent trip to Washington, D.C. In a meeting on 25 October, the **Damas de Blanco** leader urged U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden to place the defence of human rights at the heart of Washington's bilateral relations with Cuba.

Ms. Soler's visit also allowed her to receive the Battle of Crete Award from the Washington Oxi Day Foundation. The Award recognises women who take courageous action to protect and promote freedom and democracy.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/11/08/3740537/incredible-night-as-obama-meets.html>

Cuban Observatory of Human Rights criticises EU "inactivity" in letter to High Representative Catherine Ashton

In a letter to **Catherine Ashton**, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Cuban Observatory of Human Rights has accused the European Union of failing to take action against human rights abuses in Cuba. The letter expresses the Observatory's concern at the EU's "inactivity in the field of defence of human rights in Cuba". The letter, dated 24 October, denounces the "substantial increase" in repression and police brutality against pro-democracy activists during the preceding weeks. It also makes specific mention of the cases of Sakharov Laureates **Guillermo Fariñas** and the **Damas de Blanco**, who have been subjected to repeated arrests and beatings at the hands of state security forces.

<http://observacuba.org/observatorio-denuncia-ante-la-comision-europea-los-ultimos-actos-represivos-y-pide-un-mayor-compromiso-de-europa-con-los-derechos-humanos-en-cuba/> (Spanish)

Daughter of Sakharov Prize Laureate Oswaldo Payá calls for investigation into her father's death

Rosa María Payá, daughter of 2002 Sakharov Laureate **Oswaldo Payá**, continues to fight for and independent investigation into her father's death. On 22 October, **Ms. Payá** met with

Samantha Power, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. Ms. Power has been a high-profile advocate of an international inquiry since taking up her post earlier this year. Following the meeting, she tweeted, "Spoke w/@RosaMariaPaya about her father's dream of a democratic Cuba & the need for an international/independent investigation of his death."

On November 4 **Ms. Payá** told the United Nations that the organisation's failure to investigate the uncertain circumstances of her father's death is "dangerous", because it is important to find the truth so that situations like these "do not happen again."

Ms. Payá has also demonstrated her disappointment about the Spanish National Court's dismissal in September of a complaint regarding her father's death. She questioned the separation of powers in Spain, and described the decision as damaging for democracy.

<http://www.elnuevoherald.com/2013/11/04/1607452/hija-de-disidente-cubano-oswaldo.html>

Zhanna Litvina participates in discussion of human rights in Belarus

On October 30, the UN General Assembly in New York hosted a presentation and an interactive dialogue of national delegations on the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Belarus, Miklos Haraszti. After the presentation of the report, the representative of the official Belarusian delegation in his speech noted once again that Belarus did not recognize the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, and thus would not acknowledge his report. The hearing was attended by a delegation of Belarusian and international human rights organizations: representatives of the Human Rights Center "Viasna", chair of the **Belarusian Association of Journalists** (2004 Sakharov Prize Laureate) **Zhanna Litvina**, Director of the Belarusian Human Rights House Hanna Herasimava, as well as representatives of the International Federation for Human Rights and the Human Rights House Foundation.

The event aroused great interest and several countries, such as the EU states, the U.S., Switzerland and Norway, supported the report of the Special Rapporteur and once again called on the Belarusian authorities to cooperate with the special procedures and mechanisms of the United Nations, in particular to ensure access to the country for the Special Rapporteur on Belarus.

<http://eurobelarus.info/en/news/society/2013/11/05/human-rights-violations-in-belarus-were-discussed-at-un-side-event.html>

<http://belsat.eu/en/wiadomosci/a,16180,human-rights-defenders-discuss-haraszti-report-on-belarus-in-new-york.html>

Taslina Nasreen, 1994 Sakharov Prize Laureate, refused entry to India's Assam state

The government of the Indian state of Assam has denied entry to the Bangladeshi author **Taslina Nasreen**, who was invited to participate in an international seminar in the city of Guwahati. The authorities demonstrated fear that the presence of the Sakharov Prize Laureate could negatively impact support for the ruling party in the next Lok polls.

Ms. Nasreen showed no surprise at the government's decision, and denounced it as way of helping fundamentalists through capitulation. "Democracy is all about expressing one's free opinion but yet the governments cannot dare to stop the fundamentalists from stifling such

freedom," warned **Ms. Nasreen** in a report published in an Assam-based newspaper.
<http://news.oneindia.in/guwahati/assam-govt-refuses-entry-taslima-nasreen-for-votabank-report-1328649.html>

EU blacklists chiefs of prison where Ales Bialytski is currently held

The European Parliament has blacklisted the heads of the prison where the Belarusian human rights defender **Ales Byalyatski**, 2013 Sakharov Prize nominee, is currently held. On October 29, the Council of the European Union included Alyaksandr Kakunin and deputy chief Yury Trutko in its list of Belarusian citizens and economic entities subject to travel bans and asset freezes within the EU for their role in human rights violations and the persecution of political opponents. Prison authorities assigned **Mr. Byalyatski** the status of persistent violator of prison rules and declared ineligible for amnesty. Moreover, the prison administration cancelled **Mr. Byalyatski's** three-day meeting with his wife, which was scheduled for the autumn, and reduced the maximum amount he could spend on essential goods every month from 500,000 to 100,000 rubles (9€).

http://en.belapan.com/archive/2013/10/30/en_13502030H/

Pussy Riot: Nadezhda Tolokonnikova transferred to new prison

Until Tuesday 12 November, imprisoned **Pussy Riot** (2012 Sakharov Prize nominees) member **Nadezhda Tolokonnikova's** whereabouts had been unknown, and her husband had complained that he had no contact with her for weeks. Russia's human rights ombudsman has now stated that **Ms. Tolokonnikova** has been transferred to a penal colony in her native Krasnoyarsk region due to her complaints about her previous facility.

The new prison was chosen to ensure **Ms. Tolokonnikova's** safety and help her "resocialize" in a more comfortable environment, ombudsman Vladimir Lukin said in a statement - the first official confirmation of the her location in three weeks. He did not name the prison, but said official notice of her whereabouts would be sent to her relatives and lawyers soon.

Ms. Tolokonnikova, 24, and fellow **Pussy Riot** member **Maria Alyokhina**, 26, are due to be released in March 2014.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/pussy-riots-tolokonnikova-transferred-to-new-prison/489506.html>

<http://www.independent.ie/world-news/europe/pussy-riot-member-transferred-to-siberian-jail-29748503.html>

Kofi Annan delivers 3rd annual Desmond Tutu International Peace Lecture

On 7 October in Cape Town, 2003 Sakharov Prize Laureate Kofi Annan delivered this year's Desmond Tutu International Peace Lecture, entitled "Strong and cohesive societies: the foundations for sustainable peace".

The question and answer session that followed the lecture included a question on the prospect of some African countries withdrawing from the International Criminal Court, in response to which **Mr. Annan** stated that any leaders who chose this route would earn "a badge of shame for themselves and their country."

<http://www.kofiannanfoundation.org/work/newsletter>

New musical tells the story of Asmaa Mahfouz, 2011 Sakharov Prize Laureate

80 millions de Vues, a new musical directed by Nathalie Négro, tells the story of Egyptian blogger and Sakharov Laureate **Asmaa Mahfouz**, and the pro-democracy movement in which she was a leading figure. The production, described as a "slam opera" (in reference to its use of "slam poetry"), opened in Marseille on 5 November and will be performed throughout France.

<http://culturebox.francetvinfo.fr/80-millions-de-vues-un-opera-slam-en-hommage-a-la-blogueuse-asmaa-mahfouz-144825>

Statement by the President of the European Parliament

President Martin Schulz on the presentation of the 1990 Sakharov Prize to Aung San Suu Kyi and on the Chinese, Syrian and Iranian Laureates' situation

Commenting on **Aung San Suu Kyi's** visit to Strasbourg to accept the 1990 Sakharov Prize, President of the European Parliament **Martin Schulz** stated:

"Aung San Suu Kyi's strong and peaceful determination to stand for freedom of thought is a role model for all people fighting to advance the cause of human rights and democracy in the world.

The European Parliament has waited 23 long years to award this prize in-person to Aung San Suu Kyi. The European Parliament has waited decades to see a more democratic society in Burma/Myanmar where all voices and all minorities could be heard and represented."

*On this joyful occasion, we should not forget that three Sakharov Prize laureates who are still deprived of freedom of movement: Chinese **Hu Jia**, Syrian **Razan Zeitouneh**, Iranian **Nasrin Sotoudeh** and **Jafar Panahi**.*

Our thoughts go to them and our efforts will continue to pressure their governments for their freedom.

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

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/the-president/en/press/press_release_speeches/press_release/2013/2013-october/html/schulz-on-the-awarding-ceremony-of-the-1990-sakharov-prize-to-aung-san-suu-kyi

Upcoming Sakharov Prize Network events

Invitation to the 25th Anniversary of the Sakharov Prize celebration

The celebration will be held in Strasbourg, France between 17 and 21 November 2013.

Laureates are also invited by the President of the European Parliament **Martin Schulz** to attend the award ceremony of the 2013 Sakharov Prize and take part in working sessions on future actions of the Sakharov Prize Network.

European Union Human Rights Resolutions October (session 2) 2013

Human rights in the Sahel region

Parliament has considered that the current human rights challenges in the Sahel cannot be disaggregated from a general crisis of governance, encompassing widespread corruption in public office, weak provision of basic services, poor implementation of social and economic rights, and particularly in the vast and often sparsely populated Saharan regions. Sahel is one of the poorest regions of the world and establishing democracy, peace and good governance is a crucial challenge for the Sahel states.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0431+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

Migratory flows in the Mediterranean, with particular attention to the tragic events off Lampedusa

Parliament has called for humanitarian assistance to survivors of the tragic events that occurred in Lampedusa, and asks that the EU and the Member States be committed to guaranteeing migrants' universal fundamental rights, in particular the rights of unaccompanied minors, asking for an increase in the budget for the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). The problem resides in the fact that smugglers and human traffickers exploit irregular migration, and victims are forced, lured or deceived into coming to Europe by criminal networks.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0448+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>