

SAKHAROV PRIZE NETWORK NEWSLETTER No. 3/2018

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT DEMANDS RELEASE OF SALIH MAHMOUD OSMAN

15-03-18: The European Parliament [called for the immediate release](#) of **2007 Sakharov Prize Laureate Salih Mahmoud Osman**, as well as of all those arrested in Sudan since January 2018. These arrests took place in the midst of protests against recent government measures that tripled the exchange rate between the Sudanese pound and U.S. dollars, and increased the price of basic commodities.

On 15 January 2018, a local security committee in El-Obeid, Northern Kordofan, ordered the detention of Mr Osman for a period of [six months](#). On 11 March 2018, he was transferred to the police hospital due to high levels of sugar in the blood.

EP President proposes a mission to Venezuela's borders

21-03-18: After [meeting](#) Venezuela's former General Prosecutor, Ms **Ortega Díaz**, European Parliament's **Antonio Tajani** proposed to send a parliamentary mission to the Venezuelan border, in order to assess the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the country and its frontiers.

Since 2017 there has been a strong increase in asylum-seekers and migrants originating from Venezuela. According to a recent [UNHCR report](#), from 2014 to 2018 more than 145,000 Venezuelans have claimed asylum abroad, while more than 440,000 have fled under alternative forms of protective stay. The number of those leaving the country by other means is deemed to be much higher.

Cuban and Venezuelan laureates meet MEPs in transatlantic summit

21-03-18: In a panel [held](#) at the Elliott School of International Relations in George Washington University, European Parliament's **Ramon Jauregui** and **Jose Ignacio Salafranca** met with **2011 Sakharov Laureate Guillermo Fariñas** and **2017 Laureates Julio Borges and Patricia de Ceballos** in order to discuss the challenges of supporting freedom in Cuba and Venezuela. The panel also included members of the United States Congress. Cuban authorities did not allow **Berta Soler**, current leader of **2005 Sakharov Laureate Ladies in White**, to join the meeting.

European Commissioner visits Sakharov Laureate Denis Mukwege

24-03-18: In a [trip](#) to Eastern DRC, **European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides** visited the clinic of **2014 Sakharov Laureate Denis Mukwege**. The trip was a prelude to a donor's conference that will be hosted by the EU, the Dutch government and the UN, on 13 April 2018. The goal of the conference is to raise [international aid](#) for the DRC to 1.7 billion USD. The government of the DRC has [refused](#) to take part in the donor's conference. "We are governed by people who do not love us", said Dr. Mukwege. The doctor reported that the number of victims of sexual violence in Eastern DRC has increased since 2016, with a surge of violence against children.

European Parliament calls on the creation of an EU task force to seek Razan Zaitouneh

15-03-18: In a recent [resolution](#) on the current situation in Syria, the European Parliament called on the creation of an EU task force in order to coordinate and strengthen efforts to find and release **2011 Sakharov Laureate Razan Zaitouneh**. In 2013, Ms Zaitouneh was reportedly kidnapped by the armed group Jaysh al-Islam, along with her husband and two colleagues, in the outskirts of Damascus.

Head of Memorial office in Chechnya kept in pre-detention until 9 May

06-03-18: A district court in Grozny, Chechnya, extended until 9 May the pre-detention of **Oyub Titiev**, **head of the Chechnya office of 2009 Sakharov Laureate Memorial**. Mr Titiev has been under arrest since 9 January. On 22 January, a car used by the Memorial office had been set [on fire](#) in Makhachkala, Dagestan.

Asmaa Mahfouz, sued for winning the Sakharov Prize

02-04-18: **2011 Sakharov Prize Laureate Asmaa Mahfouz** has been [allegedly](#) sued for winning the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. The complaint was filed before the Attorney General of Egypt, and seems to claim that Ms Mahfouz was awarded the Prize as compensation for betraying her country. The EP monitors this situation closely.

Aliaksandr Milinkevich opens a university to form new Belarussian elits

08-03-18: **2006 Sakharov Prize Laureate Aliaksandr Milinkevich** has [registered](#) in Warsaw the Free Belarus University (FBU) fund, and will be the university's first rector. The goal of this new institution is to create an educational platform for the "elite of Belarus that can lead democratic reforms in the future". The university's programme will [include](#) distance courses and courses in partner universities, such as Warsaw University and College of Europe.

Activists and journalists call for Raif Badawi's release during Saudi Prince's visit to the West

27-03-18: American activists and journalists have taken advantage of Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohamed Bin Salman visit to the United Kingdom and to the United States in order to raise their concerns over the situation of **2015 Sakharov Prize Laureate Raif Badawi**, who has been held in prison since 2012. During the Crown Prince's visit to the United States, Mr Badawi was [granted](#) the Daniel Pearl prize for the Courage and Integrity in Journalism, by the Los Angeles Press Club.

Taslima Nasreen's book "Split: A life", once banned, now published

11-03-18: **1994 Sakharov Prize Laureate Taslima Nasreen's** book "Split: A life" is now [available](#) in English. In her book, Ms Nasreen tells her experiences and works: her stint as a doctor, how she became the target of fundamentalists, how her book "Lajja" was banned, and how she lived in exile in India. The book, originally written in Bengali, was [banned](#) in Bangladesh for allegedly hurting the sentiments of the Muslim community.

Gusmão welcomed as a hero after negotiating with Australia

11-03-18: **1999 Sakharov Prize Laureate Xanana Gusmão** [returned](#) to Timor Leste after eight months of maritime border talks with Australia. On 6 March, both countries signed a [treaty](#) drawing their maritime boundary and dividing oil and gas deposits under the seabed of the Timor Sea. Mr Gusmão, who headed Timor Leste's negotiating team, was welcomed in the country as a hero.

Jafar Panahi calls for a referendum on the Iranian ruling system

01-03-18: Iranian film director and **2012 Sakharov Prize Laureate Jafar Panahi** has [called](#) upon the leaders of the Islamic Republic to either allow a referendum in order to determine the popularity of the current ruling system, or let the people freely protest and present their demands.

Nasrin Sotoudeh: Iranian women are like a river, do not throw them down

23-02-18: In the midst of recent protests against compulsory hijab in which Iranian women have been standing on boxes and benches while waving their scarves, **2012 Sakharov Prize Laureate Nasrin Sotoudeh** [reacted](#) in the social media by stating: "The women of our country are flowing like a river, do not throw them down, do not put them in jail. They haven't committed a crime, they want the decision on their clothing to be ceded to them." Ms Sotoudeh is especially [concerned](#) about the situation in the Detention Centre of Vozara in Tehran, where women regularly are tortured.

Malala Yousafzai's new book and new school

11-03-18: In a recent [article](#), **2013 Sakharov Prize Laureate Malala Yousafzai** shared her views on her education at Oxford, her media presence, gender equality in the West. Her new book, which will be published in September 2018 under the title "We are displaced", will introduce readers to "what it means to lose your home, your community, and the only world you've ever known". The Malala Fund has just [opened](#) a school in her hometown in Shangla, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

'Women, media and technologies'- EP action together with Sakharov fellow Asma Kaouech

09-03-18: Tunisian activist and 2017 Sakharov fellow **Asma Kaouech** was among the key speakers at the conference organized in Rome by the EP's liaison office to celebrate the International Women's Day on 'Women, media and technologies: what future in the digital age?'. Ms Kaouech discussed the

actions conducted by the Fanni Raghman Anni Association against the radicalization of young people and for helping girls and women to fight against stereotypes.

In the occasion of this conference, the exhibition ‘**They defend our freedom**’ has been set up. It is an EP and Magnum Photos project, to mark 30 years of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, of which Asma Kaouech is one of the protagonists.

EP RESOLUTIONS ON THE MALDIVES CRISIS, AND ON ‘MERCY KILLINGS’ IN UGANDA

15-03-18: In addition to the resolutions concerning 2007 Sakharov Prize Laureate [Salih Mahmoud Osman](#) and 2011 [Sakharov Laureate Razan Zaitouneh](#), the 15 March 2018 plenary of the European Parliament passed two human rights-related resolutions.

First, it [called](#) on the Government of the Maldives to lift the state of emergency declared on 15 February 2018, and to liberate all protestors, journalists, politicians and judges currently arrested. (The state of emergency was lifted on 24 March 2018, but those arrested remain in jail).

Secondly, MEPs [condemned](#) the ongoing practice of “mercy killings” of babies and children born with disabilities in Uganda, and called on the Ugandan government to take all necessary measures in order to put it to an end.

On-line info: [Sakharov Prize Network website](#)