

SAKHAROV PRIZE NETWORK
NEWSLETTER
No. 4/2019

2018 Sakharov Prize Laureate Oleg Sentsov is free

07-09-2019 **Oleg Sentsov, the 2018 Sakharov Prize Laureate**, was released from jail and returned to Ukraine. Sentsov's release was part of an agreement between Russia and Ukraine to exchange groups of prisoners. The international community welcomed the exchange. In a [statement](#), EP President David Sassoli expressed relief and joy at the news of Sentsov's release. He looked forward to meeting him to hand him the Sakharov Prize in person. Sentsov was arrested in May 2014 and sentenced to 20 years in jail on trumped-up charges of plotting acts of terrorism. In 2018, he went on a hunger strike for 145 days, demanding the release of all Ukrainian political prisoners in Russia. He stopped his strike under the threat of force-feeding and due to the critical state of his health.

Links: [EPP group](#), [EEAS](#), [US State Department](#), [Reuters](#), [The Guardian](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), [Euronews](#), [CNN](#), [France24](#), [New York Times](#), [Washington Post](#)

Discover the nominees for the 2019 Sakharov Prize

18-09-19: EP Political groups and Members have nominated five candidates for this year's Sakharov Prize. Discover them, in alphabetical order:

Marielle Franco, Chief Raoni and Claudelice Silva dos Santos are a group of Brazilian activists fighting for human rights and the protection of the Amazon rainforest. Marielle Franco was an activist defending the human rights of the young, black people, women, LGBTI people and favela residents. She was murdered in 2018 in unclear circumstances. Chief Raoni, a leader of the Kayapo people living in the Amazon, is a prominent voice of campaigns for indigenous rights and for conservation of the rainforest. Claudelice Silva dos Santos is a human rights activist opposing economic interests destroying the Amazon rainforest such as illegal logging and forest burning for pastures.

Alexei Navalny is a Russian political activist and critic of corruption, opposing the regime in Russia. He has led many public protests and has run as candidate in elections. Navalny has been tried and jailed several times in reprisal for his political activities.

The Restorers are a group of Kenyan students who created i-Cut, an app helping to fight female genital mutilation. The app makes it easier for young women to seek immediate help, to find a rescue centre or to report the procedure to the authorities in places where it is illegal.

Ilham Tohti, a Uighur intellectual, is an advocate for his people's rights to religious freedom and cultural identity, opposing repression and assimilation by the Chinese authorities. Sentenced to life in prison, he remains a voice for dialogue and moderation.

Jean Wyllys and Marielle Franco are Brazilian human rights defenders nominated together to recognise their struggle for respect of women and LGBTI rights in Brazil. Jean Wyllys is a journalist, political activist and the first openly gay candidate to win a seat in the lower house of Brazil's Congress. In 2019, he went into exile because of threats to his life.

Links: [EP press release](#)

Raif Badawi hunger strike

18-09-2019 **Raif Badawi, 2015 Sakharov Prize Laureate**, went on a hunger strike to protest his increasingly severe ill-treatment in prison. He protests the denial of a medication he needs and lack of access to books. He ended his strike after a few days, on 22 September, after a visit by the supervisor of the Human Rights Commission. Badawi, a Saudi blogger and advocate of freedom of thought and expression, founded an online forum for the discussion of religion and politics. He was arrested in 2012 and was later sentenced to 1,000 lashes, 10 years in prison and a fine.

Links: [DW](#) ; [News1](#)

One year of the liberation of 2017 Sakharov Prize laureate Lorent Saleh

12th October will mark the first year of **Lorent Saleh** liberation from SEBIN prison in Caracas. Mr Saleh has been since an active voice for the rights of political dissidents imprisoned or otherwise persecuted and deprived of their rights. To mark the date, the EP invited Lorent Saleh, as well **2007 Sakharov Prize laureate Salih Mahmood Osman**, who was recently freed from jail, to participate in a session of the EP Human Rights Subcommittee on 8 October 2019. Other events with the two Laureates, relating to the protection of political dissidents' human rights, are also planned.

Venice Festival discusses 2018 Sakharov Laureate Oleg Sentsov

26-08-2019. **Sakharov Prize Laureate 2018 Oleg Sentsov** was discussed at the Cinema, Human Rights and Advocacy Summer School in Venice. A one-week training organised by the Venice Global Campus on Human Rights, this year it featured Askold Kurov, the Russian cineaste who directed the documentary "The Trial". The film exposes the trumped-up process against Oleg Sentsov. "The Trial" was screened at the Summer School and a panel discussion was held. Kurov also took part in a press conference at the Venice Festival about Sentsov, political prisoners in Russia and methods of repression and propaganda.

EP adopts Resolutions on Turkey, Myanmar and Iran

19-09-19: MEPs condemned **Turkish** authorities' decision to remove elected mayors as based on questionable evidence. MEPs criticised in particular the politically motivated sentence of **Canan Kaftancıoğlu** for his role in the campaign for mayor of Istanbul. MEPs urged Turkey to reinstate in their offices elected mayors and to change a general pattern of disrespect for the rule of law, fundamental freedoms and results of free and fair elections.

MEPs condemned the systematic suppression of the Rohingya minority's rights in **Myanmar**, in violation of international humanitarian and human rights law. MEPs called on the government of Myanmar to allow a credible investigation of the ongoing situation and to permit the safe return to Myanmar of the Rohingya who want to do so.

Following the recent detentions and trials of women's rights activists in **Iran**, MEPs called on the Iranian authorities to annul the sentences and release protesters against the compulsory wear of hijab and other unjustly imprisoned activists, such as **2012 Sakharov Prize laureate Nasrin Soutoudeh**. MEPs urged Iranian authorities to revise legal provisions discriminating against women and to respect procedural rights, such as access to a lawyer, as fundamental part of due process.

Links: [Iran](#) [Myanmar](#) [Turkey](#)