SPOTLIGHT ON HUMAN RIGHTS

SAKHIROV PRIZE
FOR FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

ARAB SPRING
ForEword
Jerzy Buzek | President of the European Parliament

In the two decades since it was first established, the Sakharov Prize has become a well-known and valuable symbol of the fight for human rights. It confirms that the European Parliament will remain a staunch defender and promoter of these fundamental values worldwide and the leading voice of Europe in favor of human rights and those who defend them.

The Sakharov Prize is awarded for freedom of thought. All other basic human rights are intimately connected to this fundamental freedom. People can exercise their freedom of expression, religion and even assembly based on freedom of thought. In the words of Andrei Sakharov: “Intellectual freedom is essential to human society – freedom to obtain and distribute information, freedom for open-minded and unfearing debate and freedom from pressure by officialdom and prejudice.”

The Arab Spring brought about transformations of truly historic significance. The events in 2011 provided thousands of examples of selfless courage in the pursuit of freedom. The 2011 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought is awarded to five representatives of the Arab Spring: Mohamed Bouazizi (Tunisia), Asmaa Mahfouz (Egypt), Ahmed al-Zubair Ahmed al-Sanusi (Libya), Razan Zaitouneh (Syria) and Ali Farzat (Syria).

Their award is a collective symbol for and recognition of all those desiring dignity, democracy and fundamental rights in the Arab world. It reaffirms the Parliament’s solidarity and firm support for the struggle for freedom, democracy and the end of authoritarian regimes.

Together with our friends in the region, we face the common challenge of rising to the hopes of the people who gave and risked their lives for the freedoms we today take for granted. Youth, empowered by social media and new communication technologies, clearly expressed their aspirations and vision. The Arab Spring directly led to the occupation of Tahrir Square in the heart of Cairo and created opportunities for change. Their deliberations and protests have not only brought about political changes, but also brought about a renaissance for women and human rights.

The European Parliament is determined to support all efforts towards democratic change and in defense of human rights.

The popular protests may have followed a varied pattern across the wider region, but they share a common call for personal dignity and a responsible and responsive government. Nevertheless, these movements are determined to support all efforts towards democratic change and in defense of human rights.

At the same time, we are aware of the challenge of safeguarding all democratic dividends that the changes have yielded so far.

FOREWORD

Jerzy Buzek | President of the European Parliament
HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The European Union is founded on the principles of freedom, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law. These principles are common to all Member States and are enshrined in the Treaty on European Union. The European Union respects the fundamental rights laid down in the European Convention on Human Rights, which was signed by all current EU Member States in Rome in 1950 under the auspices of the Council of Europe. Alongside the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the covenants based on it and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the Convention is the most important reference document for the EU and its Member States when dealing with issues of international law in the sphere of human rights.

The EU Treaty stipulates that the rights of an EU Member State which is guilty of a serious and persistent breach of the principles referred to above may be suspended and that every new Member State is required to respect those principles unconditionally. Vis-à-vis third countries, the Treaty defines the development and strengthening of democracy and the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as being amongst the most important objectives of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and development cooperation policy.

The objective has been explicitly incorporated into the Treaty largely in response to pressure from the European Parliament, which has been encouraging greater priority to human rights, not least by the appeals it receives from citizens inside and outside the EU and the many and varied activities of non-governmental organisations.

At around the same time as the EU annual human rights report is published by the Council of Ministers, the Committee on Foreign Affairs draws up an annual report on the human rights situation in the world and EU human rights policy. The Subcommittee on Human Rights, which was reconstituted at the start of the 6th legislative term, is the EP body responsible for parliamentary activities in this sphere and provides a permanent forum for discussions with human rights activists on the human rights situation and democracy in non-member countries. In addition, the Development Committee holds regular meetings about Human Rights in ACP countries or on specific subjects such as child soldiers or child slaves, where both human rights NGOs and representatives of governments concerned take part.

Human rights violations in non-member countries and, in particular, individual cases are dealt with in the monthly debates on urgent subjects and the governments involved are urged to take action. The reactions of the governments concerned suggest that they are not insensitive to criticism from the European Parliament. EP resolutions sometimes have an immediate impact and they often serve as the basis for action by the Council of Ministers. Parliament’s legislative powers allow it to withhold its assent to the conclusion of important agreements with non-member countries if there are serious breaches of human rights and democratic principles. Consequently, it insists on strict compliance with the human rights clauses that are systematically included in such agreements and which provide for an agreement to be terminated in extreme cases. Parliament has strengthened its role by adopting political resolutions as part of the assent procedure, holding hearings with civil society representatives from non-member countries, sending ad hoc delegations to assess the human rights situation on the ground and last but not least through parliamentary political dialogue, which primarily involves the inter-parliamentary delegations of the EP. At their regular meetings with parliamentarians from partner countries, the EP delegates frequently have discussions on individual cases, which have on occasion produced positive results. The main forum for political dialogue between the EP and parliamentarians from African, Caribbean and Pacific countries is the EU-ACP Joint Parliamentary Assembly. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the
Mediterranean provides further opportunities for a structured dialogue on issues of human rights and democracy with Mediterranean countries. The Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly, EurLat, established in November 2006, is the most recently created regional parliamentary forum. Among its main objectives are questions relating to democracy, external policy, governance, integration, peace and human rights.

The European Parliament also closely monitors the work of the UN Human Rights Council set up in June 2006. The European Parliament has played a decisive role in putting human rights issues on the UN agenda. It takes specific initiatives in a range of areas such as preventing torture, the protection of minorities, conflict prevention, promoting women’s and children’s rights, the protection of human rights activists, the rights of religious people and people with disabilities. The European Parliament has actively supported the campaign for a UN moratorium on the death penalty and the World Congress of national and international parliaments on the abolition of the death penalty, the establishment of the International War Crimes Tribunal, the setting-up of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, replaced by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights inaugurated on 1 March 2007, and the EU campaign to combat violence against women. By participating in election observation missions, the European Parliament makes a further contribution to strengthening democracy in third countries.

The European Parliament has been able to use its budgetary powers to substantially increase the resources earmarked for programmes dealing with democracy and human rights. In 2006 the European Parliament successfully fought for the maintenance of a separate instrument to finance such activities, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights.

This is a financial and policy instrument contributing to the development and consolidation of democracy and the rule of law, the respect of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in third countries worldwide, and includes a special focus on civil society organisations. The European Parliament also attaches great importance to the furtherance of citizens’ economic and social rights in the Union, measures to combat racism, religious intolerance and xenophobia and the treatment of asylum seekers and migrant workers. The human rights situation within the EU is dealt with by the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs. If EU citizens consider that their fundamental rights have been violated, they can take the matter up with the European Ombudsman or the Petitions Committee of the European Parliament. The Ombudsman deals with complaints relating to the activities of EU bodies, whereas the Petitions Committee deals with petitions concerning breaches of their treaty obligations by Member States. Member States are frequently required to modify their legislation to bring it into line with Community law as a result of subsequent treaty infringement proceedings.

In 2008 the Sakharov Prize celebrated its 20th anniversary. In order to mark this event the European Parliament held a conference entitled: “20 years of active support to human rights: Sakharov Laureates tell their story.” All previous laureates as well as Ms Elena Bonner, Andrei Sakharov’s widow, were invited to this event and many of them participated in the conference and had the chance to share their views on global human rights, and the importance of the Sakharov Prize. This was also the occasion for President Pöttering to officially launch the “Sakharov Network”, allowing Laureates to link to one another’s activities and to share solidarity.
Since 1988, in the spirit of Andrei Sakharov, the European Parliament has awarded the annual Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in order to honour individuals or organisations for their efforts on behalf of human rights and fundamental freedoms and against oppression and injustice. From Gorky, where he was living in exile, Andrei Sakharov (1921–1989), the renowned physicist, member of the Academy of Sciences, dissident and 1975 Nobel Peace Prize winner, sent a message to the European Parliament saying how moved he was that it intended to create a prize for freedom of thought which would bear his name. He rightly saw this as an encouragement to all those who, like him, had committed themselves to championing human rights.

Coming from a background in nuclear physics and ending as a dissident, he not only sought the release of dissenters in his country but also drew attention to the relationship between science and society and to the issues of peaceful coexistence and intellectual freedom, which he analysed in his writings. In the eyes of the world, Sakharov came to embody the crusade against the denial of fundamental rights. Neither intimidation nor exile could break his resistance.

Like Andrei Sakharov, all the previous winners of the prize which bears his name have demonstrated just how much courage, patience and inner strength is needed to defend human rights and campaign for their universal recognition. Almost all have paid dearly for their commitment to defending human dignity, and many have faced persecution, loss of personal freedom or exile. In some cases the winners have not been authorised to receive their prize in person. On 14 December 2006 European Parliament adopted a resolution denouncing this fact and calling for a follow-up mechanism to be set up to respond in such cases. In 2008, to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the creation of the Prize and to demonstrate its continuous support, the European Parliament decided to invite all past Laureates to take part in the December Award Ceremony, and especially promote the attendance of any Sakharov Prize winners who had been prevented from receiving their prizes in person in the past.

In awarding the Sakharov Prize, the European Parliament honours, in particular, outstanding achievements in the fight to protect freedom of thought and expression against intolerance, limitations and censure. This reflects its conviction that fundamental freedoms include not only the right to life and physical integrity, but also freedom of expression and of the press, two of the most effective means of fighting oppression and key yardsticks by which to judge whether a society is democratic and open. The right to untrammelled freedom of opinion and expression, which is enshrined in Article 19 of the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 16 December 1966 and which includes "the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any medium of (a person’s) choice", reflects the spirit in which the European Parliament created the Sakharov Prize.

The European Parliament awards the human rights prize, endowed with EUR 50,000, at a formal sitting in Strasbourg which falls on or around 10 December, the day on which the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in 1948.
The 2011 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought has been awarded to Asmaa Mahfouz (Egypt), Ahmed al-Zubair Ahmed al-Sanusi (Libya), Razan Zaitouneh (Syria), Ali Farzat (Syria) and the late Mohamed Bouazizi (Tunisia)—all having played decisive roles in the Arab Spring which rippled through North Africa earlier this year.

Awarding the 2011 Sakharov Prize to five activists from the Arab World, reaffirms Parliament’s solidarity and firm support for their struggle. At the same time it proves that the desire for democracy, freedom and human rights is shared on both shores of the Mediterranean.

Mohamed Bouazizi became a symbol for the young Tunisian people fighting for democracy and freedom. Setting himself on fire as a sign of protest triggered a revolt that would ultimately end President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali’s 23-year rule in Tunisia.

Asmaa Mahfouz, born in 1985, is an Egyptian youth activist who posted in January 2011 a viral video on the internet (Facebook), thus mobilizing people to take to the streets of Cairo and to protest in Tahrir Square. This lead to the fall of the Mubarak regime. Her visual blogging, “vlog”, showed how the use of social media transformed the ‘Arab Spring’ from an underground to a mainstream movement. She was also one of the co-founders of the Egyptian “April 6” youth movement, a group of internet-savvy activists who had a decisive role in organizing the mass protests.

Ahmed al-Zubair Ahmed al-Sanusi, born in 1934, is Libya’s longest-serving “prisoner of conscience”. He was accused of conspiracy in an attempted coup against the Gaddafi regime in 1970 and spent 31 years in prison. Four more than Nelson Mandela. He was released in August 2010, alongside dozens of other political prisoners. As a member of the National Transitional Council in 2011 he was in charge of political prisoners and he continued his courageous work to improve the human rights situation in Libya.

Razan Zaitouneh is a Syrian journalist and human rights lawyer who, at the time of the award, was still in hiding after the Syrian police arrested her husband and her brother. In spite of the repression, she continued to speak out for human rights in her country. In 2005, she established SHRI (the Syrian Human Rights Information Link), through which she continued to report about human rights violations in Syria.

Ali Farzat is a renowned Syrian political satirist, who has published more than 15,000 cartoons in Syrian and international newspapers. Being very critical of the Bashar al-Assad regime, he was badly beaten in August by Syrian security forces, who broke both his hands. The incident provoked an outpouring of online solidarity by cartoonists around the world showing their support for him and denouncing violence against outspoken individuals who defend their freedom of expression.
Africans will come together to jointly and cooperatively realise the common good. Historical enemies succeeded in negotiating a peaceful transition from apartheid to democracy exactly 20 years in prison. He was a member of the group founded in 1975 to campaign for compliance and cooperation.Sentence for anti-soviet agitation and propaganda. He revealed the truth about the soviet labour camps and prisons, but this earned him a prison sentence for treason, stripped of office and expelled from the Communist Party. In 1989, the European Parliament honoured Alexander Dubček (1921–1992), one of the moving spirits behind the revolution in Czechoslovakia, dubček was elected President of the federal assembly in July 1989, the European Parliament honoured Alexander Dubček (1921–1992), one of the moving spirits behind the revolution in Czechoslovakia. In 1989, the European Parliament stated “We have been waiting too long for this day; Aung San Suu Kyi should be allowed to participate in public and political life. In June 2009 the EP relaunched the campaign to free her as a political prisoner under house arrest. In 1991 Parliament awarded its human rights prize to Adem Demaçi, a Kosovar born in 1951. In 1991 Parliament awarded its human rights prize to Adem Demaçi, a Kosovar born in 1951. In 1991 Parliament awarded its human rights prize to Adem Demaçi, a Kosovar born in 1951.
The Argentinian human rights movement Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo has dedicated itself to raising his voice to make known the bitter truth about the Serbian oppression of the two million Albanians in Kosovo. "We have been living with fear and poverty for 17 years, and neither education, nor housing nor health care. For this purpose, Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo have set up a People's university, bookstore, library and cultural center. In 1999, the organization declared that it had concentrated millions of Albanians in Kosovo to fight for justice. Their weekly Thursday marches continue, however, in pursuit of action on other social causes.

When the doctor and writer Taslima Nasreen, who was born in 1962 in Bangladesh, won the Sakharov Prize in 1992 for her courageous defence of human rights and commitment to forging a peaceful, democratic resolution to conflicts between the Turkish Government and its Kurdish population, she had already spent one year in imprisonment.

In September 1998, Taslima Nasreen returned to Bangladesh for her dying mother. As soon as the news came out, religious fundamentalists once again called for the writer to be put to death. A court issued a warrant for her arrest and threatened to confiscate her assets. The European Parliament answered Taslima Nasreen's appeal for help and, in a resolution, called on the government of Bangladesh to protect her life and freedom.

Since 2004, in India. But even there, she came under increasing pressure from Muslim groups' threats by Islamic extremists and her struggles with residence permits for India, Taslima Nasreen has spent one year in imprisonment. When the doctor and writer Taslima Nasreen, who was born in 1962 in Bangladesh, won the Sakharov Prize in 1992 for her courageous defence of human rights and commitment to forging a peaceful, democratic resolution to conflicts between the Turkish Government and its Kurdish population, she had already spent one year in imprisonment.

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Jingsheng did not give up. He set up links with the Western media and continued to denounce the Chinese Government. When, in 1979, he called Deng Xiaoping a dictator in the mould of Mao Zedong, he was arrested, convicted of counter-revolutionary crimes at a show trial and sentenced to 15 years’ imprisonment and hard labour. After his release in 1983, Wei Jingsheng and his wife left China and went to the United States. In 1992, he spent some time in Hong Kong. As a result of persistent international pressure, Wei Jingsheng was allowed to return to China in 1996, though he was kept under house arrest. Even the imprisonment of Xanana Gusmão, who is also known as the “Mandela of Timor”, failed to break the opposition in East Timor. In releasing Xanana Gusmão on 20 May 2002, Indonesia began a policy of destabilising East Timor. On 7 December 1975, Indonesia invaded East Timor. In 1998, as the armed conflict between Serb provinces and the Kosovo Liberation Army escalated, the European Parliament sent out a message by awarding the Sakharov Prize to the political leader of the Kosovo Albanians. In giving the prize to Ibrahim Rugova, the European Parliament honoured a man committed to the principle of peaceful resistance to violence. Dr Ibrahim Rugova, who was born on 2 December 1944 in Cërrik, Kosovo, taught literature at the University of Pristina before being elected leader of the Kosovo Albanians Democratic Alliance (LDK) in 1989. That year, Belgrade abolished the autonomous status of the province of Kosovo, the Albanians found themselves subjected to oppression, and opposition leaders were arrested. In 1990 the two million Kosovo Albanians adopted their own constitution, in a referendum 97% of them voted for an independent Kosovo, and in 1998 they confirmed their desire for Kosovo to become an independent state. While José Xanana Gusmão served as President of East Timor until May 2007, he became Prime minister of the country following legislative elections of 30 June 2007.
the pressure group Basta ya (Stop it now), which was granted consultative status with the
United Nations Economic and Social Council in July 2004, consists of people who work for basic
human rights, democracy and tolerance in the Basque country. The members of the group came
from different ideological backgrounds but agree on three principles:

- They actively oppose terrorism.
- They support all victims of terrorism and political violence.
- They uphold the rule of law, as enshrined in the Constitution and Statute of Autonomy.

Fundamental freedoms and human rights are under threat in the Basque country from terrorism
by ETA and related groups. Thousands of people have been victims of intimidation, extermination,
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In the era of globalisation efforts have been made under Kofi Annan’s leadership to develop the UN into a more efficient instrument for global needs: “We will continue our efforts to tackle poverty, disease, climate change, and the spread of small arms. And we will also work together to fight terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. The United Nations must confront all these threats at once.”

In special memory of Sergio Vieira de Mello and the many other UN officials who have lost their lives in execution of their service for peace in the world.

In 2005, he presented to the UN General Assembly the report “A Larger Freedom” that outlined a comprehensive strategy for poverty eradication, good governance and the promotion of human rights. In awarding the 2003 Sakharov Prize to the United Nations, the European Parliament gave recognition to the United Nations staff who work tirelessly for world peace, democracy and human rights and freedom for the peoples of Cuba. The Prize was awarded in special memory of Sergio Vieira de Mello, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and one of the worthiest representatives of the UN agents in the field. The prize has become an international symbol of the determination of the UN family to defend the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The UN family is committed to the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and has been recognized as an essential instrument of the United Nations to human rights protection.

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In view of the forthcoming 60th anniversary of the UN, Kofi Annan launched a reflection on the reforms of the UN. In 2001, he presented to the UN General Assembly the report “A Larger Freedom” that outlined a comprehensive strategy for poverty eradication, good governance and the promotion of human rights. In awarding the 2003 Sakharov Prize to the United Nations, the European Parliament gave recognition to the United Nations staff who work tirelessly for world peace, democracy and human rights and freedom for the peoples of Cuba. The Prize was awarded in special memory of Sergio Vieira de Mello, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and one of the worthiest representatives of the UN agents in the field. The prize has become an international symbol of the determination of the UN family to defend the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The UN family is committed to the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and has been recognized as an essential instrument of the United Nations to human rights protection.

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Julia Núñez, the wife of Adolfo Fernández Sainz, were selected by the group to receive the Prize.

20th anniversary of the Sakharov Prize, which the Ladies in White could not attend. To this date, continues to insist on their right to receive the Prize in person at a plenary session.

An attack on them was 20 March 2004 – Palm Sunday – when they were assaulted and insulted on behalf of the Ladies in White at the ceremony of the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

Chepe, Berta Soler, the wife of Ángel Moya, Loyda Valdés, the wife of Alfredo Felipe Fuente, and the Church of Santa Rita, after which they peacefully walk down Havana’s Fifth Avenue, flowers in wearing white to symbolise innocence and purity they act like the women who used a similar tactic in the 1970s to demand information about their children who went missing during the military dictatorship in Argentina. Their women, the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, won the Sakharov Prize in 1992. Every Sunday, the Ladies in White attend religious services in the Church of Santa Rita, after which they peacefully walk down Havana’s Fifth Avenue, flowers in hand, calling for the liberation of their loved ones and for all those arbitrarily incarcerated on the island. Initially, they started writing letters to the Cuban authorities but they did not get a single reply. It was the first time in 47 years that Cubans in Cuba have gone out into the street to protest against unjust imprisonment.

Despite having been threatened and insulted, the Ladies in White continue to stand up for the rights of Cuban political prisoners and the dignity of all Cuban people. Their demand for justice and their call for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners is carried forward by a peaceful struggle. They are united in their anguish in the face of the appalling conditions their loved ones are suffering as prisoners. The Ladies in White have called for solidarity amongst all peoples for their cause.

Five women: Laila Allah, the wife of Muhamed Ado, Mariam Levy, the wife of Oscar Espinosa Chega, Berta Soler, the wife of Angel Moya, Lydia Vilada, the wife of R oberto Felipe Fuente, and Julia Núñez, the wife of Adolfo Fernández Sainz, were selected by the group to receive the Prize on behalf of the Ladies in White at the ceremony of the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

The Cuban authorities have repeatedly asked for the Ladies in White to return to Cuba. The Ladies in White refused to return to Cuba until the release of those prisoners sentenced to hard labour. However, they are not a political party or bound to a political organisation of any type. By “my only objective is to have the fundamental rights of each and every human being respected, she is acutely aware of the importance of education in the empowerment of women and as a defence for those facing the greatest deprivation. Poverty and literacy go hand in hand – and fundamentalism feeds on ignorance. Hauwa Ibrahim, who was brought up as a Muslim herself, worked tirelessly to fight against religious fundamentalism. Hauwa Ibrahim has built up what can only be described as an extraordinary practice: defending people who are condemned under Islamic Sharia law which is applied in 12 northern states of Nigeria. Disputes, marriages, divorces, wills, inheritance and other cases of cruel and inhuman punishment, such as women sentenced to flogging or young boys sentenced to amputation for theft.

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Hauwa Ibrahim has worked free-of-charge as defence counsel in 47 cases, many of which have involved murder or attempted murder of women as a result of so-called ‘honor killing’ or street fighting. She has been able to see international public opinion that made it possible to save the lives of Amina Lawal, Safiyu Musa and Hafsat Abukabar. She was equally heavily involved in other cases of cruel and inhuman punishment, such as women sentenced to flogging or young boys sentenced to amputation for theft.

Hauwa Ibrahim has become an iconic figure, but her charisma makes some uncomfortable. She is banned from pleading in Islamic courts. “I do not comment on the Koran,” she said. “I do not comment on the Koran,” she said. She is acutely aware of the importance of education in the empowerment of women and as a defence for those facing the greatest deprivation. Poverty and literacy go hand in hand – and fundamentalism feeds on ignorance. Hauwa Ibrahim, who was brought up as a Muslim herself, worked tirelessly to fight against religious fundamentalism. Hauwa Ibrahim has built up what can only be described as an extraordinary practice: defending people who are condemned under Islamic Sharia law which is applied in 12 northern states of Nigeria. Disputes, marriages, divorces, wills, inheritance and other cases of cruel and inhuman punishment, such as women sentenced to flogging or young boys sentenced to amputation for theft.

Hauwa argued successfully that Sharia law requires the Sharia courts to respect the procedural and substantive rights guaranteed by Sharia law as well as the Nigerian Constitution and that the proceedings are not in conformity with their right to a fair trial. Today, Hauwa’s cause resonates beyond Nigeria’s borders. But for her the most difficult task is yet to be achieved, that of making her voice heard in her own country.
Alaksandr Milinkevich has been arrested several times in recent years but no charges were filed against him. His Milinkevich is committed to continuing his fight for a democratic future in his country, and for the return of fundamental rights to the Belarusian people, despite a difficult political climate. In September 2010 Mr Milinkevich announced his decision not to stand as a candidate in the 2010 presidential election.

Mr Osman is a lawyer working with the Sudan Organisation against Torture (“SOAT”) to provide legal and medical aid to the victims of the conflict. He fights court cases on behalf of those charged by the Sudanese government and whose only crime is that they oppose government policies inconvenient by the current regime still continues. Mr Osman is a lawyer working with the Sudan Organisation against Torture (“SOAT”) to provide legal and medical aid to the victims of the conflict. He fights court cases on behalf of those charged by the Sudanese government and whose only crime is that they oppose government policies inconvenient by the current regime still continues. Mr Osman is a lawyer working with the Sudan Organisation against Torture (“SOAT”) to provide legal and medical aid to the victims of the conflict. He fights court cases on behalf of those charged by the Sudanese government and whose only crime is that they oppose government policies inconvenient by the current regime still continues.

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announced it was in the process of freeing 52 political prisoners. By then, Fariñas, who called for the liberation of political prisoners who had taken ill after many years of imprisonment, had been refusing food and liquids for more than 300 days. He had begun his strike in February 2010 after the controversial death of Orlando Zapata Terán, a prisoner of conscience, who died after 82 days of hunger strike.

The European Parliament has repeatedly voiced solidarity with the entire Cuban people and affirmed its support for progress towards democracy, respect and promotion of fundamental freedoms. European Parliament’s President Buzek stated in October 2010 that Fariñas’ protest carries the hopes for all of those who care for freedom, human rights and democracy, and called for the immediate release of all political prisoners.

Guillermo Fariñas could not participate in the 2010 Sakharov Prize award ceremony in Strasbourg because he was not allowed to leave Cuba.
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