

## An empty chair for Raif Badawi: follow the Sakharov Prize ceremony live

**Raif Badawi might be this year's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought laureate, but he won't be there in person to collect the award in the Parliament on Wednesday 16 December. The Saudi blogger and human rights activist remains in prison and instead his wife Ensaf Haidar, who lives in exile in Canada with their children, will represent him during the ceremony in Strasbourg. Check out our infographic for more details and follow the ceremony live on our website on 16 December from noon CET.**

Badawi is a blogger and an advocate of freedom of thought and expression who was sentenced to ten years in prison, 1,000 lashes and a hefty fine for hosting online posts that were considered blasphemous by Saudi authorities on his website promoting a social, political and religious debate.

His first series of public lashes in January 2015 provoked international outcry and also sparked concerns about his health, which so far have prevented further floggings, but Badawi still remains in prison and won't be able to receive his prize in person in Strasbourg.

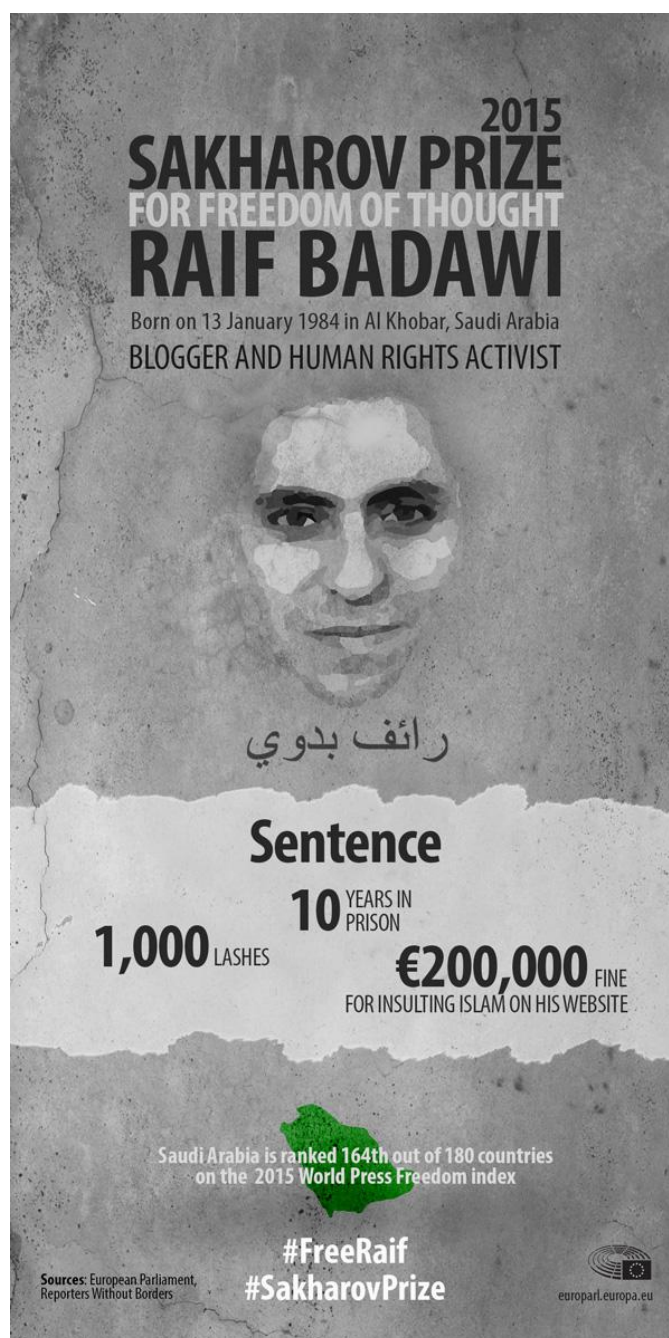
Unfortunately this not an unusual occurrence in the history of the Sakharov Prize. Among many others, Aung San Suu Kyi, who was awarded the Sakharov Prize in 1990 while under house arrest, was only able to receive the prize in person 23 years later.

Representatives of the two other 2015 [finalists](#) – the Democratic Opposition of Venezuela and Boris Nemtsov - have also been invited to attend the ceremony on 16 December.

*Follow the ceremony live online on Wednesday 16 December or on social media using the hashtags [#SakharovPrize](#) and [#FreeRaif](#). You can also find out more in our [top story](#).*

### Find out more

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