

SAKHAROV PRIZE COMMUNITY
NEWSLETTER
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Sakharov Prize Community: a new name for a new decade

01-01-2020: The New Year comes with innovation, as what we used to call Sakharov Prize Network becomes the **Sakharov Prize Community**. Many of you had argued that the word *network* was too technical. **Sakharov Prize Community** indeed better reflects what is at stake. The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought is not just an award. It is a commitment by the Members of the European Parliament to promote human rights together with the laureates. It is about solidarity, mutual support, and joint efforts. May this new name inspire us in the new decade!

Solidarity with Raif

12-2019: Last month showed widespread support for 2015 Sakharov Prize laureate **Raif Badawi**, who went on a hunger strike to protest against his solitary confinement and ill-treatment in a Saudi prison. The European Parliament, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and the government of Canada - where Badawi's family lives - reiterated their calls for his immediate release. In Belgium, MPs and celebrities locked themselves in cages in front of the Saudi Embassy as part of a protest organised by Amnesty International. Badawi's wife, Ensaf Haidar, said that the solidarity displayed in the media has given her the hope and the energy to continue her fight for Raif's release.

Links: [DW](#), [Brussels Times](#), [USCIRF](#), [The Star](#).

Timely visit of Members of the National Assembly of Venezuela to the European Parliament

16-01-2020: Williams Dávila Barrios and Maria Magallanes, Members of the National Assembly of Venezuela, Sakharov Prize laureate 2017 as part of the Democratic Opposition in Venezuela, and Isadora Zubillaga, interim President Guaidó's deputy commissioner for foreign affairs, visited the European Parliament in Strasbourg. They met several political groups and denounced the attempt of the Maduro's regime to sabotage the mandate of the National Assembly of Venezuela. The visit came against the background of the adoption, by the European Parliament, of a [resolution](#) on Venezuela where Members deplore the election of Luis Parra as President of the National Assembly as an orchestrated parliamentary coup d'état. Members further reaffirmed their support to Juan Guaidó as the only legitimate President and expressed their deep concern about the deteriorating situation of human rights, rule of law and democracy in the country.

Link: [Asamblea Nacional de Venezuela](#)

Kenyans of the year

23-12-2019: Kenyan newspaper *The Star* chose 2019 Sakharov Prize finalists, **The Restorers**, as one of their Kenyans of the year. In two interviews with the newspaper, The Restorers talked about their fight against FGM, their interest in technology and their plans with the I-Cut App. Their mentor, Dorcas Adhiambo, highlighted that "with the girls' getting the Sakharov nomination, its clear FGM is far more than a Kenyan problem. We hope many partners, including international ones, will share input on how this app can be developed to serve communities."

Links: [The Star](#), [The Star](#), [The Star](#)

Four million roubles and counting

09-01-2020: On its first working day in the new year, a Moscow court fined 2009 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Memorial** for its supposed violation of the Russian foreign agents law. Russian courts have currently examined 21 of the 28 cases brought against the organisation and the fines Memorial has to pay have risen to a staggering four million roubles (almost €60,000). However, Memorial is fighting back. It intends to appeal against all judgements and has already collected more than three million roubles through fundraising to pay the fines. During the December plenary session, the EP strongly condemned the Russian foreign agents law and the most recent amendments to it, as the law now also includes private individuals.

Links: [Deutsche Welle](#), [TV Rain](#), [Echo Moscow](#), [Radio Liberty](#), [TV Rain](#)

Nasrin's statement

10-12-2019: **Nasrin Sotoudeh**, 2012 Sakharov Prize laureate, published a statement from prison, demanding an independent investigation into the violent crackdown by the Iranian authorities on protesters in November. Nasrin herself is currently serving a 38-year sentence for her human rights work. In December, Radio Farda reported that more than one million people have signed a petition demanding her release. The Catholic University of Leuven recently joined the global campaign for Nasrin's release awarding her an honorary doctorate.

Links: [Radio Farda](#), [KU Leuven](#)

Lithuanian tour for Guillermo Fariñas

10-12-2019. On Human Rights Day, 2010 Sakharov laureate and Cuban human rights defender **Guillermo Fariñas** was invited to speak at a press conference in the Lithuanian Parliament. There, he advocated for the full implementation of the human rights clause in the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Cuba. Fariñas also met students, faculty and staff in an event hosted by the European Humanities University in Vilnius.

Links: [Cubanet](#), [EHU](#)

Urgency Resolutions

18-01-2020: During the January plenary session, the EP adopted urgency resolutions on **Nigeria** and **Burundi**. In its resolution on [Nigeria](#), the EP deplored the terrorist attacks in the country and condemned the widespread human rights abuses. In particular, it denounced the recent increase in violence against ethnic and religious communities, violence against women, the recruitment of children by terrorist groups and the ill-treatment of children in detention facilities. It also called on the international community to support the displaced population in the country. With the resolution on [Burundi](#), Members expressed concern about the continued deterioration of the human rights situation in the country. Harassment of political

opponents, restrictions on freedom of expression, intimidation and arbitrary arrests of journalists are particularly alarming, especially in the context of the upcoming elections. The EP urged the Burundian government to conduct thorough and transparent investigations into all human rights violations and to create conditions for inclusive and transparent elections. Members also expressed support Burundian civil society, IDPs and refugees.