

SAKHAROV PRIZE COMMUNITY  
NEWSLETTER  
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**White Torture - underground poetry**

18-02-2020: **Lorent Saleh**, Sakharov Prize laureate 2017, debuted with an audio-visual performance based on the poems he wrote during his detention in *La Tumba*, a prison run by the Venezuelan secret service five floors underground in Caracas. Saleh's play [came to life](#) in the garage of the European Parliament, a location mirroring the atmosphere of a modern torture centre. The performance brought the viewers into the intimate soliloquy of a political prisoner in isolation who faces his invisible torturers. It opened their eyes to white torture, a sinister psychological abuse that exposes inmates to white light 24/7, leaving no trace of blood, but destroying their minds. Around the world, criminal regimes inflict this type of torture on women and men for their defence of human rights and freedom of conscience. White torture - underground poetry will next be staged at the European Youth Event (EYE) in Strasbourg on 29-30 May.

**Cuban authorities detain Sakharov Prize laureate**

04-02-2020: **Guillermo Fariñas**, Sakharov Prize laureate 2010, was arrested before travelling to the European Parliament to participate in a meeting of the Subcommittee on Human Rights. EP Vice-President Heidi Hautala and Chair of the Human Rights Subcommittee Maria Arena published a [statement](#) on his arrest, urging the Cuban authorities to respect Guillermo's rights and to allow him to travel to Europe. The authorities eventually [released](#) Guillermo, but he was not allowed to leave Cuba.

**More on Cuba**

18-02-2020: The Subcommittee on Human Rights [exchanged views](#) on the human rights situation in Cuba with Elena Larrinaga de Luis from 2005 Sakharov Prize laureate **Ladies in White** and with Alejandro Raga from the Cuban Human Rights Observatory. The committee members also focused on **Guillermo Fariñas**, who was prevented from attending the meeting by the Cuban authorities. Elena Larrinaga emphasised that gender violence - both in the public and in the private sphere - is a significant problem in Cuba and that the government seems unwilling to implement the necessary changes. Alejandro Raga highlighted that the Cuban government has increased its repression of human rights defenders and urged the EU to review its cooperation agreement with Cuba, ensuring that respect for human rights becomes a binding condition for cooperation.

**Solidarity with Raif**

25-01-2020: **Raif Badawi**, 2015 Sakharov Prize laureate, and his lawyer Waleed Abulkhair were transferred to a hospital on 25 January. Both started a hunger strike in early December 2019 to protest against their solitary confinement and ill-treatment in prison. More detailed information about their condition has not been disclosed. Raif's wife Ensaf Haidar has not been able to [contact](#) her husband since 14 January.

### The Chief in the UK

30-01/02-02-2020: **Chief Raoni**, 2019 Sakharov Prize finalist, was one of the keynote speakers at the International Colloquium “Amazon: rising violence and disturbing trends”. During this [four-day conference](#), indigenous leaders, scientists, civil society representatives and policy makers gathered to discuss socio-environmental policies, legacies from the past and the rising level of violence against environmental defenders.

### A small victory in Russia

15-01/02-02-2020: We previously informed that the Perm branch of 2009 Sakharov Prize laureate **Memorial** was fined for “illegal logging”, because the organisation cleaned and restored an abandoned cemetery of victims of Stalin’s repressions. A Russian court in Perm, however, recently [reversed](#) this fine. Moreover, another Russian court [decided](#) for the first time to not fine the head of Memorial for a supposed violation of the Russian law on foreign agents. Memorial has already received fines in 24 other cases of this type. The fines together amount to some five million roubles (around 72.000 euro).

### Justice for Razan

29-01-2020: The French police has arrested a senior official from the Syrian rebel group Jaysh al-Islam on charges of war crimes, torture and enforced disappearances. Jaysh al-Islam is suspected of having abducted 2011 Sakharov Prize laureate **Razan Zaitouneh**, who has been missing in Syria since 2013. Several prominent [human rights organisations](#) have filed a complaint against the rebel group. This arrest is seen as a first step in the process of getting justice for Razan.

### Sentsov’s numbers

18-02-2020: **Oleg Sentsov’s** dystopian film “Numbers”, which he co-directed while still imprisoned in Russia, premiered at the [Berlin International Film Festival](#). 2018 Sakharov Prize laureate Sentsov and his producer exchanged more than a [hundred letters](#) during his imprisonment discussing the production of the film. Sentsov himself was also present at the premiere to talk about the film and the conditions under which it was created.

### The Ghandi of the Balkans

21-01-2020: Hundreds of people [gathered](#) in Pristina to commemorate **Ibrahim Rugova**, the first president of Kosovo who passed away 14 years ago. Ibrahim Rugova was a writer, academic and politician, renowned and praised for his non-violent pursuit of an independent Kosovo. In 1998, the European Parliament honoured his efforts by awarding him the [Sakharov Prize](#). Rugova [viewed](#) the prize as representing “for me and for all the people of Kosovo, a recognition of our peaceful struggle and our sacrifices”. In 2002, Rugova was re-elected president and served until his death in 2006, days before negotiations on Kosovo's final status were due to start.

### Urgency Resolutions

13-01-2020: During the February plenary session, the EP adopted urgency resolutions on **Guinea** and **Madagascar**. In its resolution on [Guinea](#), the EP strongly condemned the breaches of freedom of assembly and speech and the other human rights abuses that take place in the country. The EP also urged the government to respect constitutional provisions on

presidential term limits, to guarantee free, fair and transparent elections, and to enable an independent investigation into the deaths and injuries of protesters. In the urgency resolution on [Madagascar](#), the EP expressed its deep concern about the large amount of children working under harsh and unsafe conditions in the country's mines. The EP called on the Malagasy authorities to guarantee the safety and integrity of all children and urged the EU and its Member States to support Madagascar in implementing provisions on children's rights. MEPs also reiterated that the eradication of child labour is one of the priorities of the new EU Commission.