

SAKHAROV PRIZE COMMUNITY
NEWSLETTER
No. 8/2020

The Belarus Democratic Opposition is the 2020 Sakharov laureate

22-10-2020: The European Parliament has decided to award the 2020 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to the **Democratic Opposition in Belarus**. The other finalists competing for the Prize were **the Guapinol activists and Berta Cáceres**, environment and indigenous rights defenders in Honduras, and **the archbishop of Mosul in Iraq**, who helped the evacuation of religious minorities from Mosul to Kurdistan in 2014. The Coordination Council of Belarus is an "initiative of courageous women", including the main opposition candidate Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Nobel laureate Svetlana Alexievich and the musician and political activist Maryia Kalesnikava. Among its members are also civil society personalities who have led in recent months the peaceful opposition to Lukashenko's presidency, such as Siarhei Tsikhanouski, video blogger and political prisoner, Ales Bialiatski, founder of the human rights organisation "Viasna", Siarhei Dyleuski, Stsiapan Putsila, founder of the Telegram channel NEXTA and Mikola Statkevich, political prisoner and presidential candidate in 2010.

2020 Sakharov Prize finalist Guapinol activist murdered

13-10-2020: Arnold Joaquin Morazán Erazo, member of the Guapinol environmental group was killed in Tocoa, Honduras. Eight imprisoned Guapinol activists were shortlisted for the 2020 Sakharov Prize with Berta Cáceres, murdered in similar circumstances in 2016. The Guapinol group fights against illegal logging and land grabbing from indigenous peoples in Honduras. They are in prison after taking part in peaceful protests against a polluting mining company. Arnold Morazán is the second Guapinol activist murdered. On 29 August 2019, Roberto Antonio Argueta Tejada was assassinated the day before the initial hearing of the trial against Guapinol activists. EP President Sassoli called for [an immediate and independent investigation](#) while Vice-President Hautala [demanded justice for Arnold Joaquin Morazan Erazo and for all environmental activists killed in Latin America](#).

Fifth Edition of Sakharov Fellowship launches remotely

21-10-2020: Covid-19 has forced the Brussels and Venice-based programme into a remote edition, with once-a-week online sessions from 21 October to 25 November 2020. This year's focus is on ways to ensure protection and respect of human rights in times of global crises and on preparing the fellows to address related challenges. The programme further explores EU and UN mechanisms to support human rights work, women's rights, LGBTI and migrants and minorities' rights. Fellows will have individual advocacy opportunities with Members of the European Parliament and other stakeholders from EU institutions.

Nasrin Sotoudeh denied hospital treatment as her health is critical

20-10-2020: Despite numerous appeals by the European Parliament and the international community for the release of Nasrin Sotoudeh given her critical health situation, the Iranian authorities have transferred her to Qarchak prison South of Teheran. Conditions there are

even poorer than in Evin prison and put her life in greater danger. While Nasrin was told she would be taken to the hospital, she was transferred to Qarchak instead.

Nasrin Sotoudeh had recently received the [Right Livelihood](#) from cell, “for her fearless activism, at great personal risk, to promote political freedoms and human rights in Iran”. Widely known as the “Alternative Nobel Prize,” this award was established in 1980 to “honour and support courageous people solving global problems”.

Dr Mukwege addresses S&D Africa week

14-10-2020: “The EU-Africa partnership must focus on development cooperation on issues of common political interest between Europe and Africa and broader cooperation on migration issues, climate change, peace and security”. This is the key message 2014 Sakharov Prize laureate Dr Denis Mukwege conveyed in a Euronews interview for the [4th edition of the Africa Week organised by the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament](#). He also flagged the impact of Covid-19 pandemic, which affected badly the work of the Panzi Hospital and Foundation and the socio-economic situation of victims in Bukavu.

Memorial’s Yuri Dmitriev sentence increased to 13 years

29-09-2020: The Supreme Court of Karelia increased Yuri Dmitriev’s sentence on appeal from 3 years and 6 months to 13 years imprisonment in a high security penal colony. Dmitriev chaired the Karelia branch of **2009 Sakharov Prize laureate Memorial**. The EU believes that Mr Dmitriev’s prosecution was triggered by his human rights work and his research on political repression in the Soviet period. A statement by the EU External Action Service noted that the verdict is unjust and another evidence of a worsening of the human rights situation and shrinking space for civil society in Russia. Mr Dmitriev should be released immediately, also having in mind Mr Dmitriev’s age and poor health.

[EEAS statement](#)

New steps towards the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime

19-10-2020: The European Commission and the VP/HR Josep Borell put forward a [Joint Proposal](#) for a Council Regulation concerning implementation of sanctions against human rights violations and abuses worldwide. The Joint Proposal for is one of the legal acts required by Council to proceed with the establishment of the new EU horizontal sanctions regime. Once in force, the new EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime will provide the EU with greater flexibility to target those responsible for serious human rights violations and abuses worldwide, no matter where they occur or who is responsible.