

SAKHAROV PRIZE COMMUNITY  
NEWSLETTER  
No. 5/2020

**EP marks International Day in Support of Victims of Torture with premiere of documentary by Lorent Saleh**

**26-06-2020:** The Sakharov Community and DROI Subcommittee [marked the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture](#) with the premiere of *Torture26*, a short documentary directed by 2017 Sakharov Laureate **Lorent Saleh**. EP Vice-President Fabio Castaldo moderated the event, followed by a debate with MEPs on fighting modern torture, including Vice-President Heidi Hautala, Lorent Saleh, and Prof. Manfred Nowak, Secretary-General of the Global Campus on Human Rights and former UN Special Rapporteur on torture. The documentary is part of an international campaign launched in February 2020 with the theatre performance [White Torture - underground poetry](#) in Brussels, an artistic depiction of the effects of torture on the human mind.

**Raif Badawi back from Solitary Confinement**

**14-05-2020:** 2015 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Raif Badawi** who was arrested in 2012, is back to the standard section of his prison. He was able to contact his family again. His wife, Ensaf Haidar, reported that he was currently in a good condition. Badawi has now been in prison for more than eight years. The Sakharov Community repeatedly called for his liberation, along with other jailed Sakharov laureates Nasrin Sotoudeh and Ilham Tohti. An urgent appeal for their release, as well as the release of all prisoners of conscience and human rights defenders, was in May 2020. [Tweet](#)

**Two Years of Nasrin Sotoudeh's Detention**

**13-06-2020:** 2012 Sakharov Prize Laureate **Nasrin Sotoudeh**, a human rights lawyer and activist, was arrested and transferred to Tehran's Evin Prison two years ago. On 17 December 2018 she lost her appeal on the five-year prison sentence for "espionage into hiding", handed down to her in 2016. In addition, on 11 March 2019, Nasrin learned that she had been sentenced *in absentia* to 33.5 years in jail and 148 lashes by the Revolutionary Court in Tehran. She was permitted to briefly call her husband, Reza Khanden, to inform him of the sentence and he subsequently posted the news on Facebook. She is now due to serve 38.5 years in prison. Nasrin Sotoudeh remains active from jail: in March 2020, she went on a hunger strike to demand the release of all political prisoners in Iran, amid the coronavirus crisis. [Source](#)

**Venezuela Court Orders Takeover of Two Political Parties; Opposition Parties say they will not recognise The Upcoming Elections**

**16-06-2020:** Venezuela's Supreme Court ordered the takeover of two political parties ahead of parliamentary elections. Primero Justicia and Acción Democrática, saw their board of directors suspended and replaced by the court. Primero Justicia is the party of **Julio Borges**, who was awarded the Sakharov Prize in 2017 in the name of the National Assembly, along with political prisoners listed by Foro Penal Venezolano. No legal action was taken against Voluntad Popular, the party of opposition leader Juan Guaidó.

Four opposition political parties - Primero Justicia, Acción Democrática, Voluntad Popular, and Un Nuevo Tiempo - co-signed a document announcing that they would not recognise the results of this year's parliamentary elections. They denounced the lack of transparency, legal obstacles to the opposition and the risk of fraud. They protested that the Supreme Court has appointed the new members of the National Electoral Council without the consent of the National Assembly, which in their view violates the Constitution. [Source](#) (Supreme Court); [Source](#) (Elections)

### **Nadia Murad launches the draft *Murad Code*, a *Global Code of Conduct for the Documentation and Investigation of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence***

**19-06-2020:** 2016 Sakharov laureate **Nadia Murad**, along with the Institute for International Criminal Investigations and the UK initiative Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, launched the draft *Global Code of Conduct for the Documentation and Investigation of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*, for consultation and further development. The global code of conduct, together with a *Commentary to the Code* and a *Survivor's Charter* make up the main components of the **Murad Code project**. Its aim is to build a community of better practice for and with survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. The project aims to offer a code of conduct for reporters, researchers, documenters and investigators to ensure greater respect for survivors' rights. It upholds legal requirements to report incidents and prevent further trauma of survivors with the help of governments, international organisations and civil society. [Source](#)

### **Nadia Murad urges western leaders to protect northern Iraq from Turkish airstrikes**

**15-06-2020:** 2016 Sakharov Prize laureate **Nadia Murad** has urged Western leaders to help protect her homeland in northern Iraq after it was bombarded by Turkish warplanes targeting Kurdish rebels. The strikes targeted several positions in Mount Sinjar, the homeland of the Yazidi population that suffered rape, mass-murder, and enslavement at the hands of ISIS. "The international community has again abdicated its moral responsibility to facilitate a safe and dignified return for Yazidi genocide survivors to their homeland," she regretted. [Source](#) ; [Tweet](#)

### **Dr. Mukwege resigns as head of local task force fighting Covid-19 in Eastern DRC**

**10-06-2020:** 2014 Sakharov Prize laureate **Dr. Denis Mukwege** has stepped down from his position as vice-president of an exceptional health commission set up to fight Covid-19 in South Kivu province. Dr. Mukwege blamed the government for "weaknesses in organisation and clarity between the various teams in charge of the response to the pandemic in South Kivu." He regretted the lack of respect for precautionary measures and the scarcity of tests. His resignation will allow him to devote himself entirely to the care of patients at Panzi Hospital, he said. [Statement](#); [Source](#)

### **Hu Jia, other activists, under house arrest as China strives to prevent commemorations of the Tiananmen Square Massacre**

**04-06-2020:** To prevent commemorations of the date June 4, 1989 - when Chinese tanks rolled into Beijing's Tiananmen Square to crush a student-led democracy movement, Chinese authorities have put under house arrest members of Tiananmen Mothers, a group of relatives of Tiananmen Massacre victims. The police also put under house arrest many activists,

including 2008 Sakharov Prize laureate **Hu Jia**, and prohibited them from communicating with others or updating their social media accounts. [Source](#)

**Oleg Sentsov concerned over the investigation of journalist Pavel Sheremet's murder**

**17-06-2020:** 2018 Sakharov Prize laureate Oleg Sentsov sent a letter to Ukrainian President Zelensky, about the arrest of three military volunteers for the 2016 murder of journalist Pavel Sheremet. Sentsov voiced concerns over the lack of evidence for this arrest and feared a violation of the presumption of innocence in this case, as courts keep extending the suspects' detention. The case, Sentsov argues, is an attempt at intimidating military volunteers who took part in opposing Russia's annexation of Crimea. [Source](#)