

**SAKHAROV PRIZE COMMUNITY
NEWSLETTER
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SAKHAROV WEEK 2020: the Democratic opposition in Belarus

On 16 December, the Sakharov Prize was awarded to the Democratic opposition in Belarus, in recognition of their struggle for freedom and human rights and for inspiring the peaceful popular movement for democracy in Belarus. “Your courage and the strength of your spirit have led the way for the revolution that has taken over your country in 2020. We all salute you and pay tribute today to your resistance and perseverance”, EP President Sassoli acknowledged. The ceremony was attended by Sviatlana Tsikanouskasya, Veronika Tsepkala, Siarhei Dyleuski, Ales Bialiatski, Stsiapan Putsila, Maria Adamovic (wife of Mikola Statkevich), Tatiana Khomich (sister of Maryia Kalesnikava) and Volha Kavalkova. Sviatlana Tsikanouskasya paid tribute to “each and every Belarusian who takes part in the peaceful protest against violence and lawlessness. Each of them is a hero. Each of them is an example of courage, compassion, and dignity.” She underscored the free spirit and liberty dreams of the Belarussian people, awarded the Sakharov Prize for three times in 20 years. The representatives of the Democratic opposition in Belarus also met with Political Groups, Committees and Delegations and gave media interviews. The Sakharov Prize finalists assisted, remotely, to the ceremony and discussed their causes with political groups.

Link: [European Parliament](#)

Nasrin Sotoudeh returns to prison

2-12-2020

2012 Sakharov Prize laureate Nasrin Sotoudeh was sent back to prison on 2 December, after a temporary release of less than a month due to her very poor medical condition, before any improvement of her health conditions. Nasrin went back to prison the day before she was due to receive the Right Livelihood Award, alongside 2020 Sakharov Prize Laureate Ales Bialiatski, Nicaraguan lawyer Lottie Cunningham Wren and US lawyer Bryan Stevenson.

Links: [FIDH](#); [The Right Livelihood Foundation](#)

Marino Córdoba awarded prestigious Colombian Human Rights prize

02-12-2020: Sakharov Fellow Marino Córdoba, from Colombia, was awarded the [Colombian Prize for the Defence of Human Rights](#). The prize distinguished Marino’s work for defending the human rights of African-Colombian populations subject to forced displacement. Marino suffered several attacks between 1997 and 2011 for seeking justice for these populations.

Venezuela’s National Assembly election

06-12-2020: In an election boycotted by the opposition parties rallied around Juan Guaidó, Nicolas Maduro’s Gran Polo Patriótico won with 67% of the votes, with a turnout of just 31% of Venezuelan voters. The result allows Maduro’s regime to reinforce its grip on the country by retaking control of the National Assembly, which was awarded with the Sakharov Prize in 2017 as a pillar of the democratic opposition. The election was deemed not free and fair, and its results were not internationally recognised. The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy declared [on behalf of the EU](#) that the 6 December election did not respect political pluralism and could not be considered credible, transparent and representative of the will of the Venezuelan people.

Bertha Soler detained in Cuba

11-12-2020: Cuban security officers arrested human rights activist Bertha Soler on 10 December, the day before her scheduled participation in the meeting of the EP Delegation for relations with Central America. Bertha Soler is a member of Sakharov Prize 2005 laureates Damas de Blanco. Though released shortly afterwards, she was prevented from participating in the meeting. Delegation Chair **Tilly Metz**, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee **David McAllister** and **Heidi Hautala**, Vice-President for the Sakharov Community, issued a [statement](#) deploring the behaviour of Cuban authorities, in breach of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Cuba. Delegation Vice-Chair **Javier Nart** condemned Berta's detention on International Human Rights Day in a [tweet](#). In February 2020, Cuban authorities had arrested Guillermo Fariñas, barring him from travelling to Brussels to participate in a meeting of the European Parliament Human Rights Subcommittee.

Belarussian Journalists Association summoned for questioning

16-12-2020: The 2004 Sakharov Prize laureate, [was summoned](#) for questioning in a probe related to activities "directed at causing damage to the national security". The probe comes in the context of massive popular protests against the 9 August elections followed by increased repression on opposition parties and free media. Since August, at least 373 journalists have been arrested, six of whom are currently detained, the [UN said](#) earlier this month.

[Committee to Protect Journalists](#)

10 years since 2011 Sakharov Prize Laureate Mohammed Bouazizi's self-immolation

17-12-2020

Protesters in the central Tunisian town of Sidi Bouzid demanded on Thursday 17 November a "new revolution" on the commemoration of 10 years since the self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi that triggered the Tunisian revolution and led to the collapse of the Ben Ali regime. In response to protests, local authorities cancelled the 10th commemoration ceremony.

Link: [Africa News](#)

EU Global Sanctions Regime to enter into force

07-12-2020: The EU finally adopted the long awaited Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime. It aims at enabling the EU to stand up in a more tangible and direct way for human rights, one of the fundamental values of the EU and its foreign policy. The mechanism targets individuals and entities responsible for or involved in serious human rights violations or abuses worldwide. It can also target individuals and entities associated with the perpetrators. Perpetrators can be banned from entering the EU, their assets in the EU can be frozen and any EU person can be prohibited from making funds and economic resources available to perpetrators.

[Press release](#) [Publication in EU Official Journal](#) [Questions and Answers](#)

Urgency Resolutions

18-12-2020

During the December plenary session, the EP adopted urgency resolutions on **Iran**, **China**, and **Egypt**. On **Iran**, it reiterated its strong condemnation of the arbitrary detention and recent return to prison of 2012 Sakharov Prize laureate Nasrin Sotoudeh and called for her immediate and unconditional release. It strongly condemned the execution of French-based

journalist Ruhollah Zam and of wrestler Navid Afkari and called the authorities to halt the imminent execution of Ahmadreza Djalali and release him, as well as the hundreds people detained arbitrarily for exercising their rights. The EP strongly condemned forced labour imposed by the government in **China** on Uyghur, ethnic Kazakh and Kyrgyz, and other Muslim minorities, deplored systematic human rights violations amounting to crimes against humanity and called on private companies to exercise their corporate responsibility and terminate business relations where such abuses are perpetrated. In the resolution on **Egypt**, the MEPs strongly condemned the continuing and intensifying crackdown on fundamental rights and on the civil society as a whole and expressed their indignation for the arrests of senior EIPR activists Gasser Abdel Razek, Karim Ennarah and Mohammad Basheer in retaliation for their legitimate meeting with European diplomats in Cairo.