

SAKHAROV PRIZE NETWORK NEWSLETTER No. 1/2018

EP PRESIDENT DEFENDS LEYLA ZANA

11-01-18: **Leyla Zana, a member of the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party and 1995 Sakharov Prize Laureate was stripped of her status of Member of the Turkish parliament** by a majority vote, due to her refusal to take her oath exactly in the way required by the Turkish Constitution and frequent absences due to the fact that Zana was not allowed to participate in the sessions. **EP President Antonio Tajani stated at the opening of the January plenary session in Strasbourg that it was "unacceptable" and "illegitimate"** for a representative of the people to be dismissed. He also voiced his general concern over human rights violations against politicians, civil society, academics and journalists in Turkey. Leyla Zana was the first Kurdish woman to be elected to the parliament of Turkey. Links: [Statement by the President](#), [Reuters](#), [ANF News](#)

Head of Memorial office in Chechnya arrested; Memorial's office in Ingushetia set on fire

17-01-18: Two unknown men have torched the office of the **2009 Sakharov Prize Laureate, Memorial**, in the region of Ingushetia. The attack took place a days after **the police detained the head of Memorial's office in neighbouring Chechnya, Mr Oyub Titiev**. The 60-year old activist was accused of holding cannabis. **Sakharov Prize Laureate Oleg Orlov**, chief of Memorial's North Caucasus research, confirmed that the two attacks are related to a crackdown on Memorial's work in Chechnya, which documents torture, disappearances and punitive house burnings. *"It's obvious to us that there is a link between the arson attack with those forces who are trying to destroy the work of Memorial in Chechnya and squeeze Memorial out of the entire North Caucasus region"*, Memorial said in a statement. EP Chairs of the Foreign Affairs committee, **David McAllister**, and of the Human Rights Subcommittee, **Pier Antonio Panzeri** called for immediate release of Oyub Titiev. Links: [EP Press room](#), [AP News](#), [Voa News](#)

Lorent Saleh's mother announces the creation of a Sakharov Space in Venezuela

04-01-18: After receiving the Sakharov Prize in the name of her son and her return to Venezuela, **Yamile Saleh, mother of the 2017 Sakharov Prize Laureate Lorent Saleh, launched a new initiative called Sakharov Space (Espacio Sájarov)**. Reflecting on the current situation in Venezuela and inspired by Andrei Sakharov's legacy, this educational project aims at promoting an open public space for discussion, studying and providing training on human rights and democracy and strengthening civil society in Venezuela.

The Sakharov Prize Laureates join forces in support of Iranian protests.

10-01-18: According to a [FIDH report](#), more than 3700 people have been detained, 31 protesters have died on the streets and at least three detainees have died in prison since the beginning of the protests in Iran on 28 December 2017. After speaking to several prisoners in Evin prison, **2012 Sakharov Prize Laureate Nasrin Sotoudeh** added that at least two other protesters had died in jail and expressed her concern about the use of unofficial detention centres, which drew nationwide attention during the 2009 protests. **Through his wife, Ensaf Haidar, 2015 Sakharov Prize Laureate Raif Badawi** sent his honest greetings from prison to the brave revolutionaries in Iran. **2008 Sakharov Prize Laureate Hu Jia** stated that *"the way Iranians staged their protests and the way their protests were quelled by police, following instructions from the authorities, will have an impact on both the Chinese people and local police"*. Links: [The Guardian](#), [FIDH](#), [Voa News](#), [IBT](#)

Nicholas Opiyo receives a prestigious award from German President

14-01-18: **Ugandan human rights lawyer and 2016 Sakharov fellow Nicholas Opiyo** was awarded with two international prizes for his activities in the human rights field. In November 2017, he received the German African Prize for his contribution in promoting civil rights and political freedom in Uganda. The award was presented to him by the German Africa Foundation and handed over by the German

Federal President in Berlin. In December 2017, the Uganda Pride Committee also awarded Opiyo with the Incredible Partner Award, recognising his work in supporting the LGBTI community in Uganda.

Ladies in White complain about Federica Mogherini's visit to Cuba

05-01-18: **2005 Sakharov Prize Laureate Ladies in White** sent a letter to the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini, complaining over the **missed opportunity to organise a meeting with the Ladies in White during her visit to Cuba**. Leader of the movement Berta Soler reproached Mogherini that a purpose of her visit was purely economic, without taking into account human rights on the island. Soler, who was detained the same day when Mogherini arrived, called this visit *a lost opportunity which showed, that Cubans are really alone*.

Foreign Ministry of Poland awards Nadia Murad with Pro Dignitate Humana prize

07-12-17: Polish Deputy Foreign Minister Marek Magierowski awarded the Pro Dignitate Humana prize of this year's Warsaw Dialogue of Democracy to **2016 Sakharov Prize Laureate Nadia Murad** and to **Farida Abbas Khalaf**, due to their efforts as human rights activists and representatives of the persecuted Yazidi minority. In his speech, Magierowski said the prize is a *"symbol of our recognition of [their] sacrifices in defending the rights of people who are persecuted, specifically the Yazidi minority... Despite [their] own dramatic experiences, [they] relentlessly promote respect for human dignity"*. Links: [Twitter](#), [Yazda](#)

Aung San Suu Kyi welcomes army's admission of killings as a positive step

12-01-18: After Myanmar's military unprecedentedly admitted that soldiers and Buddhist villagers carried out extra-judicial killings of 10 Muslims in northern Rakhine State in September, **1990 Sakharov Prize Laureate, Burmese leader Aung San Suu Kyi** spoke of a 'positive step' during a conference with the Japanese foreign minister in Myanmar. *"I see it that way because a country needs to take responsibility for the rule of law in the country, and this is the first step on the road of taking responsibility and it is a positive thing,"* she said. In December 2017, the European Parliament renewed its call to end hostilities against Rohingya. Links: [Reuters](#), [EP](#)

EP URGENCY RESOLUTIONS ON RELEASE OF A VIETNAMESE BLOGGER, BAN ON THE MAIN OPPOSITION PARTY IN CAMBODIA, DECRIMINALISATION OF MISCARRIAGE IN EL SALVADOR AND HUMAN RIGHTS WORLDWIDE

14-12-17: In four resolutions adopted during its December plenary session, the EP called on the [Vietnamese](#) authorities to release blogger Nguyen Van Hoa and all citizens detained for exercising their freedom of expression and to end all restrictions on the activities of human rights defenders. The EP also called on the [Cambodian](#) authorities to reverse the ban on the main opposition party *Cambodia National Rescue Party* and expressed their concern about the general election scheduled for July 2018. Furthermore, MEPs urged the [El Salvador](#) government to free women and girls prosecuted and imprisoned for miscarriage or after suffering stillbirths and to decriminalise abortion. Additionally, MEPs passed a [Human Rights Worldwide Resolution](#) stating that the EU must act to stop persecution based on religion and halt migrants' rights violations and human trafficking. Links: [EP Press release](#); [EP Press release](#)

EP URGENCY RESOLUTIONS ON ELECTIONS IN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA AND DETAINED HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS IN CHINA

18-01-18: In three resolutions adopted during its January plenary session, the EP called for the presidential and legislative elections in [Democratic Republic of Congo](#) which had not been held by the 2017 deadline. The EP expressed its deep concern about the security situation in [Nigeria](#) and called on the Nigerian government to undertake appropriate steps. The MEPs also called on [Chinese authorities](#) to release all those who are being detained for their human rights work, notably blogger Wu Gan, pro-democracy activist Lee Ming-che, Tibetan language rights advocate Tashi Wangchuk and Tibetan monk Choekyi. Link: [EP Press release](#)

On-line info: [Sakharov Prize Network website](#)