



*Committee on Foreign Affairs
Committee on Development
Subcommittee on Human Rights*

10.9.2015

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Subject: **SAKHAROV PRIZE FOR FREEDOM OF THOUGHT 2015**

Members will find attached the list of candidates in alphabetical order, as well as the justifications and biographies received by the Human Rights Actions Unit, for the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought 2015, who have been nominated pursuant to the Sakharov Prize statute by at least 40 Members of the European Parliament or by a political group.

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
FOR EXTERNAL POLICIES

SAKHAROV PRIZE FOR FREEDOM OF THOUGHT 2015

Candidates proposed, in alphabetical order, by political groups and individual members

	Candidate	Activity	Nominated by
1	Edna ADAN ISMAIL	Edna Adan Ismail literally rolled up her sleeves and got to work transforming her native Somaliland from the despair and ruins of a long and bloody civil war into a rare success story on the Horn of Africa. Edna's lifelong championing of women's rights and challenging of cultural and stereotypical traditions has led to outstanding improvements in the role of women in modern Somaliland society. She served as Somaliland's first female Minister of Foreign Affairs. Her Edna Adan Hospital offers free medical access, has reduced mortality amongst mothers to a quarter of the national average and trains large numbers of medical professionals. Since the launch of her educational programme on female genital mutilation, the numbers of women affected have declined dramatically. Her role as President of the Organisation for Victims of Torture underlines her as a standard bearer for common decency and human rights.	Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy Group

2	Raif BADAWI	<p>Raif Badawi is a Saudi Arabian blogger, writer and activist and the creator of the website Free Saudi Liberals, an online platform for political and religious debate. Reportedly, his website hosted material criticizing senior religious figures and Badawi suggested that the Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University had become a den for terrorists. He was arrested in 2012 on a charge of insulting Islam and indicted on several charges including apostasy. He was convicted and sentenced to seven years in prison and 600 lashes in 2013, and then resented to 1,000 lashes and ten years in prison plus a fine in 2014. The first 50 lashes were administered before hundreds of spectators on 9 January, 2015. Subsequent sets have been postponed in the face of international condemnation and Badawi's dire state of health. Having received death threats, his wife and three children fled to Canada. His sentence was upheld by the Supreme Court in June 2015 and he remains in jail</p>	<p>Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament; European Conservatives and Reformists Group and The Greens/European Free Alliance</p>
3	<p>Democratic opposition in Venezuela embodied by the <i>Mesa de la Unidad Democrática</i> and political prisoners</p>	<p>The Sakharov Prize has to have a certain value in order to help the laureate not only for moral support to continue the democratic "fight" but also to achieve the noble objectives for which the prize is awarded. It could serve as a protective shield against persecution. These requirements and conditions come together in application to the Mesa de la Unidad Democrática (Democratic Unity Roundtable), which integrates all democratic opposition to the totalitarianism of the current Venezuelan President Maduro, including political prisoners. One year and a half after the demonstrations in Venezuela more than 1,700 protesters await trial, more than 70 remain jailed, and at least 40 people were killed in the protests, their murderers remaining unaccountable. Politicians like Leopoldo Lopez, Antonio Ledezma, Daniel Ceballos, students and other opposition leaders remain arbitrarily detained or under house arrest, under unfounded accusations for exercising their right of freedom of expression and their fundamental rights.</p>	<p>Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and Fernando Maura Barandiarán and Dita Charanzová</p>

4	<p align="center">Boris NEMTSOV</p>	<p>Boris Nemtsov was a leading personality of the Russian civil society who worked for a democratic, prosperous and peaceful Russia. A fearless fighter for freedom and democracy in Russia, he was murdered in February 2015 on a bridge near the Kremlin walls, a few weeks after he started to work on a dossier proving the involvement of Russian military forces in the war in eastern Ukraine. He pursued this work in spite of intimidation and pressure to hold the Kremlin responsible for the death of Russian soldiers in Ukraine and to make clear that this military intervention in a neighbouring state is not waged in the name of the Russian people. Boris Nemtsov spent his life engaging for a different Russia, at peace with its neighbours, governed by democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law. As opposition leader and civil society activist he worked to expose corruption and abuse of political power in Russia.</p>	<p align="center">Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe</p>
5	<p align="center">Nadiya SAVCHENKO</p>	<p>Nadiya Savchenko, a Ukrainian citizen and former pilot of the Ukrainian Ground Forces, was captured by the pro-Russian separatists in the Eastern part of Ukraine in June 2014. She was subsequently transferred to Russia and initially charged with complicity in the death of two reporters. In the course of the judicial proceedings against her, which are still ongoing, these charges have been upgraded. She now stands accused by the Russian authorities of murder of the two journalists. Savchenko is also accused of illegally crossing the border of the Russian Federation. While in a Russian prison, she was elected member of the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada and became a member of the Ukrainian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). The EU and the US have called for her release, which the Russian authorities have so far refused.</p>	<p align="center">European Conservatives and Reformists Group</p>

6	<p>Edward SNOWDEN, Antoine DELTOUR, Stéphanie GIBAUD</p>	<p>Edward Snowden is an American computer specialist and former CIA/NSA employee who revealed details of several American mass surveillance programmes. Following the revelations, Snowden was charged by the U.S. government with espionage, theft and illegal use of government property. Having been refused asylum in several Member States, he currently resides in Russia.</p> <p>Antoine Deltour was the main whistleblower in the Luxleaks financial scandal revealing the content of hundreds of highly favourable tax agreements between the Luxembourg tax authorities and audit firms on behalf of their international clients. He has been indicted by Luxembourg authorities on multiple charges including theft, violation of trade secrecy, and fraudulent access to data.</p> <p>Stéphanie Gibaud played a decisive role in reporting practices of tax evasion, tax fraud and money laundering by the French and Swiss subsidiaries of UBS. Dismissed by her employer for refusing to destroy the contents of incriminating computer files, Gibaud has since contributed to the creation of an international platform for whistleblowers.</p>	<p>European United Left - Nordic Green Left</p>
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Edna ADAN ISMAIL

Nominated by Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy Group

Every generation, mankind brings forward the gift of a handful of people who are genuinely able to reach out and make a positive influence towards the wellbeing of humanity. **Edna Adan Ismail** is, without any shadow of a doubt, one such person.

A native Somalilander, alongside many of her kinsmen, she literally rolled up her sleeves and got to work returning Somaliland from the despair and ruins of a long and bloody civil war, transforming her homeland into a rare success story on the Horn of Africa.

Edna's lifelong commitment, successfully championing women's rights at the same time as challenging her societies' cultural and stereotypical traditions, have led to outstanding improvements in the role of women in modern Somaliland society.

Not content with her own long and esteemed diplomatic career as Somaliland's first female Minister of Foreign Affairs, over many years she has transformed her Edna Adan Hospital in Hargeisa to not just offer free medical access to women from all backgrounds and nationalities across the Horn of Africa, but also used this superb facility to train large numbers of the next generation of Africa medical professionals. Since Edna opened the hospital in 2002, and despite the hospital dealing with the highest risk cases, maternal mortality amongst mothers in the hospital is one quarter of the national average, and in this time over 14,000 babies have been successfully delivered. The hospital runs an excellent training scheme for midwives across the region, and has achieved remarkable results successfully educating women about the very real damage caused through the cultural taboo of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Since the launch of her educational program, there has been a dramatic decline in the numbers of women affected by FGM, with a commensurate fall in numbers that goes against the trend in the rest of the Horn of Africa. Through sheer determination, she has saved the lives of countless mothers and newborn children, as well as positively changing the lives of many women across the Horn of Africa for the better.

Furthermore, not content with her long work improving gender equality, her role as President of the Organisation for Victims of Torture, underlines her lifetime commitment as a standard bearer for common decency and Human Rights. Accordingly, Mrs. Edna Adan Ismail fully deserves to receive the 2015 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.



Raif BADAWI (Saudi Arabia)

Nominated by the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament

Raif (Raef) Badawi, born 13 January 1984, is a Saudi Arabian writer and activist and the creator of the website Free Saudi Liberals.

He was arrested in 2012 on a charge of insulting Islam through electronic channels and brought to court on several charges including apostasy. He was convicted and sentenced to seven years in prison and 600 lashes in 2013, then resentenced to 1,000 lashes and ten years in prison plus a fine in 2014. The lashes were to be carried out over 20 weeks. The first 50 were administered before hundreds of spectators in front of a Jeddah mosque on January 9, 2015. The second set has been postponed more than twelve times. The reason for the most recent postponement is unknown, but in previous weeks the lashes have been delayed due to Badawi's poor health. Badawi is known to have hypertension and his health has worsened since the flogging began. His wife, Ensaf Haidar, has asserted that Raif will not be able to survive the punishment.

In June 2015, Saudi Arabia's Supreme Court upheld the sentence of 1,000 lashes and ten years in prison.

He married Ensaf Haidar in 2002 in Saudi Arabia. His wife and children obtained political asylum in Quebec, Canada, in 2013. He is the father of three children, a daughter, Najwa (born 2003), a son, Terad (born 2004), and a daughter, Miriyam (born 2007).

Trial and sentence

On 17 June 2012, he was arrested and in December of that year was also cited for apostasy, a conviction which carries an automatic death sentence. Human Rights Watch stated that Badawi's website had hosted material criticizing "senior religious figures". Badawi had also suggested that Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University had become "a den for terrorists."

Badawi was first detained on apostasy charges in 2008, but was released after a day of questioning. The government banned him from leaving the country and froze his bank accounts in 2009. The family of Badawi's wife subsequently filed a court action to forcibly divorce the couple on grounds of Badawi's alleged apostasy.

Following Badawi's 2012 arrest, Amnesty International designated him a prisoner of conscience, "detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression". A spokesman for the group stated that, "Even in Saudi Arabia where state repression is rife, it is beyond the pale to seek the death penalty for an activist whose only 'crime' was to enable social debate online". Human Rights Watch called for the government to drop the charges, stating, "The charges against him, based solely on Badawi's involvement in setting up a website for peaceful discussion about religion and religious figures, violate his right to freedom of expression".

Awards

PEN Canada One Humanity Award 2014,

Netizen Prize of Reporters without Borders 2014,

Aikenhead Award 2015 of Scottish Secular Society,

Courage Award from the Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy 2015,

DW Freedom of Speech Award 2015,

Honorary Title for Freedom of Expression, granted by Brussels University Alliance (VUB and ULB) 2015,

Press Freedom Prize 2015 from Reporters Without Borders Sweden



Raif BADAWI (Saudi Arabia)

Nominated by the European Conservatives and Reformists Group

Raif Badawi is a Saudi Arabian citizen and a blogger who has been persecuted by the state for his actions.

On 16 June 2012 Badawi was arrested for operating a website – Free Saudi Liberals - that was alleged to "propagate liberal thought". Badawi was subsequently tried in a religious court and sentenced to 600 lashes and seven years in jail for "insulting Islam through electronic channels".

Subsequently his punishment has been increased to 1,000 lashes and 10 years imprisonment, in addition to a fine of nearly €250,000. The first set of lashes, 50, was administered on 9th January 2015. Subsequent sets have been postponed in the face of international condemnation and Badawi's dire state of health following the 50 lashes.

Badawi, aged 31, was married in 2002 and has three children. His family have since sought political asylum in Canada and the Canadian authorities have offered the same rights of asylum to Badawi.



Raif BADAWI - a symbol of worldwide struggle for free speech

Nomination by the Greens/European Free Alliance

Raif Badawi (born in 1984) is an outstanding Saudi human rights activist and a symbol of worldwide struggle for freedom of speech. His work as a blogger constitutes a landmark in the struggle for human rights in one of the most repressive countries in the world.

His fearless support of free speech which gained him great recognition as an e-activist was perceived as a threat by the Saudi authorities. Facebook, Twitter and other social media are extremely popular in a country where people can't openly voice their opinions in public. He was arrested in June 2012 in relation to content published on his website 'Saudi Arabian Liberals', an online platform for political and religious debate. In July 2013 and May 2014, he was convicted of several charges, including apostasy and insulting Islam through electronic channels, and sentenced to 1,000 lashes, ten years in prison, a heavy fine and prevented from using any kind of media or travelling until 2034.

On 9 January 2015, Raif Badawi received the first 50 of these lashes in public – the remainder were postponed following massive international protests. In spite of global condemnation, his sentence was upheld by Saudi Arabia's Supreme Court in June 2015 and he remains in jail, with a serious health condition. Having received death threats, his wife and three children fled to Canada, where they received political asylum.

On 12 February 2015, the European Parliament adopted a resolution strongly condemning Raif Badawi's flogging as a "cruel and shocking act by the Saudi Arabian authorities" and called for his immediate and unconditional release as "he is a prisoner of conscience, detained and sentenced solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression".

Awarding the Sakharov Prize 2015 to Raif Badawi would send a powerful signal of European support and appreciation for the work of the activists and prisoners of conscience in Saudi Arabia and the wider region, and contribute to global efforts to achieve justice and freedom for Raif Badawi. It would also reassert the importance of value-driven politics where economic and security interests outweigh other concerns, notably human rights.

The Democratic opposition in Venezuela embodied by the *Mesa de la Unidad Democrática* and political prisoners

Nominated by the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)

The Sakharov Prize has to have a certain value in order to help the laureate not only for moral support or encouragement to continue the democratic "fight" but also has to intend to achieve the noble objectives for which the prize is awarded. In addition, it could serve the purpose of representing a protective shield against persecution which usually laureates characterize and unfortunately often suffer from. All those requirements and conditions come together in the application of the Mesa de Unidad Democrática (Democratic Unity Roundtable), which integrates all democratic opposition to the totalitarianism of the current Venezuelan President Maduro, including political prisoners.

According to this, we would like to suggest "**The Democratic opposition in Venezuela embodied by the Mesa de la Unidad Democrática and political prisoners**" for the 2015 Sakharov Prize. This candidate encounters three main objectives: opportunity, representation of the defended global values, and effectiveness of awarding the Prize.

One year and a half after the demonstrations that took place in Venezuela more than 1.700 protesters await trial, more than 70 remain jailed, and at least 40 people were killed in the protests, their murderers remaining unaccountable. A democratic state must not criminalise the leaders of the political opposition and must guarantee the participation of all sectors in the political life of the country. Politicians like Leopoldo Lopez, Antonio Ledezma, Daniel Ceballos, students and other opposition leaders remain arbitrarily detained or under house arrest, under unfounded accusations for exercising their right of freedom of expression and their fundamental rights, as it has been stated by several UN bodies and international organisations.

The EP has supported in many occasions by a large majority in the Plenary the resolutions on the situation in Venezuela and the persecution that democratic opposition suffers. Now, with this proposal, we intend to reach the same support from the Groups in order to give a firm support to democratic struggle in Venezuela. Therefore, this candidacy which should not generate any antipathies or opposition by the other political Groups of this Parliament may contribute to the triumph of democracy and contribute to respect for human rights in Venezuela, where the majority of the population endures unbearable suffering.

** Mesa de la Unidad Democrática*

Es una coalición de partidos políticos que aglutina toda la oposición política pacífica y democrática al oficialismo chavista. Abarca el más amplio espectro, englobando partidos que van la izquierda más militante hasta partidos de centro derecha.

Entre sus propuestas programáticas principales se encuentran: fortalecer el sistema democrático venezolano, garantizar los derechos humanos, consolidar la soberanía nacional, alcanzar una sociedad productiva, justa y libre, y el mayor nivel de bienestar para sus ciudadanos, todo ello basado en el respeto escrupuloso de los preceptos de la Constitución de Venezuela.



Boris NEMTSOV

Nominated by the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe

Boris Nemtsov was a leading personality of the Russian civil society who worked for a democratic, prosperous and peaceful Russia, to be awarded the 2015 Sakharov Prize.

Boris Nemtsov, fearless fighter for freedom and democracy in Russia, was murdered last February on a bridge near the Kremlin walls, a few weeks after he started to work on a dossier proving the involvement of Russian military forces in the war in eastern Ukraine. He pursued this work in spite of intimidation and pressure with the goal to hold the Kremlin responsible for death of Russian soldiers in Ukraine and to make clear that this military intervention in a neighbour state is not waged in the name of the Russian people.

It is Boris' whole life which makes us convinced that he merits the Prize: he spent it engaging for a different Russia - Russia at peace with its neighbours, governed by democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law. As opposition leader and civil society activist he worked to expose corruption and abuse of political power in Russia, including a report on corruption linked to the Sochi Olympic Games. In the late 1990s, Boris focused as Member of the Federal Government on reforming Russia's economy.

Based on this we propose to award the 2015 Sakharov Prize to Boris Nemtsov. The prize should go to the Boris Nemtsov Foundation established recently by Boris Nemtsov's daughter Zhanna to support the Russian civil society and its struggle for a peaceful, free and democratic Russia.

We believe it is the right moment to signal with the Sakharov prize support for the personality who devoted his life to engagement for a different, democratic Russia, and award the means related to the Prize to the Fund dedicated to implementation of Boris Nemtsov's legacy.

With your help and backing we can send this important signal of support to the Russian people and also to our citizens.



Nadiya SAVCHENKO (Ukraine)

Nominated by the European Conservatives and Reformists Group

Born in 1981, **Nadiya Savchenko**, a Ukrainian citizen and former pilot of the Ukrainian Ground Forces, was captured by the pro-Russian separatists in the Eastern part of Ukraine in June 2014. She was subsequently transferred to Russia.

Savchenko was initially charged with complicity in the death of two reporters. In the course of the judicial proceedings against her, which are still ongoing, these charges have been upgraded. She now stands accused by the Russian authorities of murder of the two journalists. Savchenko is also accused of illegally crossing the border of the Russian Federation.

While in Russian prison, she was elected as a member of the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada and became a member of the Ukrainian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). The European Union and the United States have called for her release, which the Russian authorities have refused so far.

Edward SNOWDEN, Antoine DELTOUR and Stéphanie GIBAUD

Nominated by the European United Left - Nordic Green Left

Edward Snowden is an American computer specialist and former CIA/NSA employee who revealed details of several American mass surveillance programmes. In 2013, Mr Snowden publicised classified information regarding the monitoring of phone calls, as well as large-scale internet tapping systems as part of the PRISM and XKeyscore monitoring programmes. Following the revelations, Edward Snowden was charged by the U.S. government with espionage, theft and illegal use of government property. Having been refused asylum in several Member States, Edward Snowden currently resides in Russia.

Antoine Deltour has been the main whistleblower in the "Luxleaks" financial scandal revealing the content of hundreds of highly favourable tax agreements between the Luxembourg tax authorities and audit firms on behalf of their international clients. Mr Deltour provided French journalist Edouard Perrin with documents that the ICIJ network later used to perform their revelations. He has been indicted by Luxembourg authorities in December 2014 on multiple charges including theft, violation of trade secrecy, and fraudulent access to data.

Stéphanie Gibaud played a decisive role in reporting practices of tax evasion, tax fraud and money laundering by the French and Swiss subsidiaries of UBS. Dismissed by her employer for refusing to destroy the contents of incriminating computer files, Ms. Gibaud has since contributed to the creation of an international platform for whistleblowers.