



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

15.9.2022

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Subject: SAKHAROV PRIZE FOR FREEDOM OF THOUGHT 2022

Members will find attached the list of candidates (in alphabetical order) who have been nominated for the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought 2022 pursuant to the Sakharov Prize statute by at least 40 Members of the European Parliament or by a political group, as well as the justifications and biographies received by the Human Rights Actions Unit.

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
FOR EXTERNAL POLICIES

SAKHAROV PRIZE FOR FREEDOM OF THOUGHT 2022

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

	Candidate	Activity	Nominated by
1	Shireen Abu Akleh	A Palestinian-American journalist for Al Jazeera for 25 years, Shireen Abu Akleh was one of the most prominent reporters in the Arab-speaking world, well known for her reporting on the conflict in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. A strong believer in freedom of expression, she chose journalism to be close to the people. She was shot dead on 11 May 2022, while covering a raid by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) on a refugee camp in Jenin.	Grace O’Sullivan and other 42 Members
2	Julian Assange	Julian Assange was one of the activists behind the WikiLeaks association. He was responsible for providing world-leading newspapers with documents proving war crimes, arbitrary detentions, human rights violations and cases of torture unworthy of states claiming to be democratic. Consequently, he was subject to judicial persecution. His eventual extradition to the United States will send a bleak message to journalists, activists and citizens alike: that government can suppress the freedom of the media if they feel threatened by journalists.	Sabrina Pignedoli and other 40 Members
3	The Brave Ukrainian People represented by President Volodymir Zelenskyy	Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine is inflicting unspeakable suffering on the Ukrainian people. It violates international law and threatens European and global security. The brave Ukrainian people are fighting to protect their homes, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. They are fighting for freedom, democracy and the rule of law. They defend European values on the battlefields every day. Their sacrifice must not go in vain.	European People’s Party

4	Sônia Guajajara	<p>Sônia Guajajara, is an environmental and indigenous activist in Brazil, leader of an alliance of native peoples. She is working for the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples to control their land. Her activism is even more important at a time when the Bolsonaro government is defunding environment and indigenous protection agencies, which in turn encourages powerful farming and mining lobbies to invade illegally the indigenous territories. Her struggle made her a target of harassment and criminalisation by state agents.</p>	<p>Greens/European Free Alliance</p>
5	The People of Ukraine	<p>The Ukrainian people have bravely stood up to Russia's war of aggression. They are suffering from atrocities, devastation, loss of life and hardships. 10 million are internally displaced and 6 million have had to flee their homeland. Ukrainians are defending their freedom and independence, European values and our continent. They have shown heroism and unity, rescuing and caring for the wounded, evacuating civilians, providing food and shelter, recording war crimes and helping victims. Individuals, representatives of civil society initiatives and state and public institutions that provide emergency assistance, defend and protect human rights, Ukrainian statehood and democracy should receive the prize.</p>	<p>Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats</p> <p>Renew Europe</p>
6	President Zelenskyy	<p>Brave Ukrainians standing against a brutal Russian war defend human rights and our shared European values. The February 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine drew the world's attention to Russia's human rights violations and to the courage and bravery of Ukrainians. Their fight for values and democracy will eventually prevail over brutal force and oppression. President Zelenskyy is a face of this courage, endurance and devotion to his people and to European values. Giving him the Sakharov Prize would be a sign of recognition of the heroic acts Ukrainians commit every day.</p>	<p>European Conservatives and Reformists</p>

7	<p>The Truth Commission in Colombia (Francisco de Roux, Alejandro Valencia Villa, Marta Ruiz Naranjo, Alfredo Molano Bravo posthumous, Alejandro Castillejo, Saúl Alonso Franco, Lucía Victoria González, Patricia Tobón Yagarí, Alejandra Miller, Leyner Palacios, Ángela Salazar Murillo-posthumous, and Carlos Martin Beristain)</p>	<p>The Truth Commission is one of the three institutions that make up the Colombian Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition created under the 2016 peace agreement. It has advocated for the rights of millions of victims of the Colombian civil war. This candidature pays tribute to the victims, whose courage and persistence were the basis for the Commission's creation. It is also an opportunity to support the peace process in Colombia and to highlight the access to truth, justice and reparation for victims as a necessary first step in peacebuilding. Without truth, reconciliation is not possible. Without reconciliation, the risk of repetition remains real.</p>	<p>The Left group in the European Parliament - GUE-NGL</p>
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Biographies

Shireen Abu Akleh (posthumous)

Presented by Grace O’Sullivan and other 42 Members



Shireen Abu Akleh was a Palestinian-American journalist for Al Jazeera for over 25 years, and came to be one of the most prominent reporters in the Arab-speaking world for her reporting on the conflict in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. In particular, she was known for reporting on violations of international law and life under occupation.

On 11 May 2022, Shireen was shot and killed in the course of her work while covering a raid by the Israel Defence Forces on a refugee camp in Jenin. Subsequent investigations by CNN, The New York Times, Bellingcat, The Washington Post and local NGOs all concluded that the IDF was responsible for her killing.

The family of Shireen are currently campaigning for a full US-led investigation into the journalist's death and the events that followed. Members of the family have also supported this initiative to award Shireen the Sakharov Prize.

Her candidature for the Sakharov Prize would be an important signal for freedom of the press, freedom of expression, human rights, and women working in conflict.

Biographies

Julian Assange, symbol of citizens' right to information and knowing the truth

Presented by Sabrina Pignedoli and other 40 Members



His nomination for the 2022 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought stems from the realisation that his case and his imprisonment represent the political power attempt to 'punish' those who do not conform to pre-packaged truths.

With documents, film footage and concrete evidence, Assange, with his association WikiLeaks and in collaboration with the world's leading newspapers, has made it possible for citizens to learn about horrific war crimes, arbitrary detentions, human rights violations and cases of torture unworthy of states that claim to be democratic. This journalistic work was carried out by concealing sensitive sources and data, in order to avoid endangering those working in the field.

Assange could have sold the secrets he came into possession of, but he did not in the name of freedom of the press, making him a defender of freedom of expression and human rights. Promoting and preserving these values lie at the foundation of the prestigious Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.

The judicial treatment he was subject to represents an attack on these fundamental freedoms the European Parliament is proud to be a strenuous defender. In defence of Mr Assange, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights also recently intervened, denouncing how “the potential extradition and prosecution of Mr. Assange raises concerns relating to media freedom and a possible chilling effect on investigative journalism and on the activities of whistle-blowers.”

Assange's case puts a spotlight on freedom of the media and citizens' fundamental right to access information. His eventual extradition to the United States will send a bleak message to journalists, activists and citizens alike: that government can suppress the freedom of the media if they feel threatened by journalists.

Assange's nomination to the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought means to convey an opposite message: democracy is not afraid of the truth.

The Brave Ukrainian People represented by President Volodymir Zelenskyy

Presented by the European People's Party



“Courage has a face, the face of Ukrainian men and women who are standing up to Russian aggression.”

President von der Leyen - State of the Union Address

24 February 2022 will be marked in history books as the day when Russia brought war back to Europe. Russia’s unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine grossly violates international law and the principles of the UN Charter. It threatens world peace as well as European and global security and stability. It is inflicting unspeakable suffering on the Ukrainian people.

The EU and the world has witnessed that the brave Ukrainian people are the defenders of their country. They are not fighting only to protect their homes, sovereignty, independence, but also their territorial integrity within international recognised borders. They are fighting for freedom, democracy, and the rule of law.

We have no doubts that the brave people of Ukraine, represented by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, deserve to win this year's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. They continue to defend European values on the battlefields every day and their sacrifice must not go in vain.

**Sônia Guajajara,
for her work defending the rights and ancestral lands of indigenous peoples
in Brazil**

Presented by the Greens/European Free Alliance



The Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament has decided to nominate as its candidate for the 2022 Sakharov Prize: Sônia Guajajara, for her work defending the rights and ancestral lands of indigenous peoples in Brazil.

Sônia Guajajara, an environmental and indigenous activist, and politician, was born in Arariboia Indigenous Land in Maranhão, Brazil. She has been working for the protection of the environment and the rights of indigenous peoples to control their land in the face of large agricultural landowners and extractive industries.

For nine years, she was the executive coordinator of the Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil (Articulation of the Indigenous Peoples of Brazil, or "APIB"), an organization that represents around 300 indigenous communities in Brazil. Granting her the Sakharov Prize would be an opportunity to draw attention to the struggle of indigenous peoples in Brazil and would help to gain recognition for their lands.

Over the past three years, Jair Bolsonaro's government has drastically reduced the budgets and remit of institutions such as Funai, the National Indian Foundation and Ibama, the environmental protection agency. As a result, illegal invasions of indigenous territories have increased dramatically, and deforestation in the Amazon has accelerated.

Sônia Guajajara is on the front line of the fight against the Bolsonaro government's attempt to destroy indigenous lands. She regularly participates and brings to a broader audience the stories of her people in international fora, such as the UN Human Rights Council and the UN Climate Negotiations. Her work ranges from attending COP26—which created a fund for Indigenous peoples and local communities recognizing their essential work protecting land and forests from degradation—to recent months when she led thousands-strong protests, bringing together hundreds of indigenous peoples.

These actions made it possible to open up debates on a national scale and to block draft laws liberticidal towards indigenous peoples. In 2020, she has also brought national attention to the

trampling of Indigenous rights during the COVID-19 pandemic. Her invaluable contributions to the indigenous movement of Brazil earned her various recognitions. In fact, she was recently named one of Time's 100 Most Influential People in the World in 2022¹.

Sônia Guajajara's involvement in the indigenous movement made her a target of various attacks. She is consistently subject to harassment and criminalization by state agents, as attempts to silence and discourage her from continuing her fight for the rights of indigenous peoples.

Despite the attacks against her and the Guajajara People, Sonia Guajajara remains one of Brazil's most dynamic advocates for human rights. She is an inspiration for indigenous women who are disproportionately impacted by lack of access to education and employment opportunities, decision-making and access to justice. She also emphasizes the value of having government representation for indigenous peoples to ensure that their voices will be heard.

¹ <https://time.com/collection/100-most-influential-people-2022/6177858/sonia-guajajara/>

The People of Ukraine

Presented by the Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats and Renew Europe

Since 24 February 2022, the Ukrainian people have bravely stood up to Russia's unprovoked and unlawful war of aggression. The ongoing aggression is a new scale of the war Russia launched against Ukraine in February 2014 after the Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity, during which the Ukrainian people demanded that their country follow a pro-European path. Every day, the people of Ukraine are suffering from Russian atrocities, devastation, destruction, loss of life, social and economic decline and other hardships. More than 10 million Ukrainians are living the life of internally displaced persons, and more than 6 million, mainly women with children and the elderly, have been forced to flee their homeland.

Ukrainians are not only defending their freedom and independence and that of their country. They are defending European values and our continent against a brutal regime that seeks to undermine our democracy, weaken and divide our Union.

Over the past six months, we have seen the heroism and unity of Ukrainians against their oppressors. Rescuing and caring for the wounded, evacuating civilians from the hot spots, providing food and shelter to those in desperate need, recording war crimes and providing support to the victims - these are examples of the hardships and devastating challenges that Ukrainians face every day.

The proposal is to dedicate the 2022 Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought to the People of Ukraine. The prize itself would be awarded to individuals, representatives of civil society initiatives and state and public institutions that provide emergency assistance to war-affected people, defend and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, Ukrainian statehood and democracy.

For the European Parliament's 2022 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, we, therefore, nominate ***The People of Ukraine***, represented, among others, by The State Emergency Services (SES) of Ukraine, Yulia Pajevska, Oleksandra Matviychuk, The Yellow Ribbon Civil Resistance Movement, and Ivan Fedorov.



The State Emergency Services (SES) of Ukraine - has been rescuing people from under the rubble and from fires caused by daily shelling, clearing debris and unexploded ordnance to ensure safe passage for residents and humanitarian aid workers, and evacuating people to safer locations. According to data received at the end of June 2022, SES responded to over 38 000 emergency responses, extinguished 10 078 fires caused by shelling,

evacuated 1 861 000 people, rescued 1 487 people and cleared 620 square km of mined areas. Incurred losses: 39 killed, 122 injured, 6 captured, and 1 missing. More than 3 500 rescuers

serve in the territories that Ukraine does not control. More than 5 500 volunteers joined SES, which consists of 70 000 personnel, since 24 February 2022.



Yulia Pajevska (“Taira”) - Ukrainian volunteer, paramedic. Founder of the evacuation medical unit "Angels of Taira". Since 2014, she has been saving the lives of the military and civilians in the Donbass. In March 2022, during the evacuation of civilians from Mariupol, she fell into Russian captivity. She spent three months in captivity.

Oleksandra Matviychuk - human rights lawyer, chairwoman of the Center for Civil Liberties NGO. Since 24 February, Matviychuk – along with a team of volunteers, lawyers and paralegals – has been recording war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the Russian army in Ukraine. Her team works as a part of a wider initiative called "Tribunal for Putin", which so far registered 17 000 criminal acts by the Russian army. Matviychuk is dedicated to ensuring justice for the victims of Russia's war against Ukraine. Her service in documenting human rights abuses and providing assistance to the victims traces back to the 2014 Maidan events. At that time, she coordinated the Euromaidan SOS civic initiative. Later she run multiple international mobilization campaigns for the release of prisoners of conscience. She is the author of human rights publications and the co-author of an annual report on monitoring the political persecution of civil society in Ukraine.



The Yellow Ribbon Civil Resistance Movement - originated in the temporarily occupied city of Kherson and soon inspired people to civil action resistance in other occupied areas, including Melitopol and the Crimean peninsula. It plays an important part in defending the freedom of speech and ruining Russian intentions for occupied areas. The Movement encourages Ukrainians to resist and denounce Russian occupation by painting blue and yellow ribbons and other Ukrainian

symbols in public spaces and, more importantly, to mobilize and prevent Russian troops from holding a pseudo-referendum in the temporarily occupied areas of Ukraine. They create and spread leaflets, inspire people in occupation and provide information to Ukrainian authorities and outside audiences about what is happening in the occupied territories. Ukrainian journalists nominate the Yellow Ribbon Civil Resistance Movement as worthy of the Sakharov nomination for its contribution to the freedom of speech.



Ivan Fedorov - was elected mayor of Melitopol until 11 March 2022, when he was kidnapped by Russian forces and replaced by a pro-Russian interim mayor. Among Ukrainians, Fedorov had become a symbol of oppression and resistance and an example of courage in the face of invasion. Before his kidnap, Fedorov was taking care of 150 000 inhabitants of Melitopol and, after his release, continues advocating for international support for the people of Melitopol who live under Russia's occupation.

President Zelenskyy

Presented by the European Conservatives and Reformists Group



Brave Ukrainians, who are standing against brutal Russian war, are in the epicentre of defence of human rights and our shared European values. The brutality of Putin's regime has started in 2013, when young Ukrainians stood firm in protest for European values and democracy. During the cold winter, they were protesting against kleptocratic Putin-Yanukovych alliance with no values, but coming back to the Soviet-style dictatorship. Putin's incapacity to tolerate peaceful youth-led protests in Ukraine have spilled into Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and the war in the East of Ukraine. Since then, this injustice has taken away many human lives and has put into despair thousands of Ukrainians under the shameful Russia's rule.

The February 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine has put Russia's human rights violations and courage of Ukrainians back into the attention of the global media coverage. It has put us into a state of despair because of the Russia's brutality and hope because of the bravery of Ukrainians. Their eventual victory will be a live testimony that fight for values wins over the brutal force and oppression.

President Zelenskyy is a face of this courage, endurance and devotion to the values, his people, and European values. Giving Sakharov Prize to the President of Ukraine, as a face of the fight of his nation, would be an additional sign of recognition of the heroic acts committed by regular Ukrainians on daily basis. If not for him, who knows where the Russian tanks would be today, maybe on the European Union territories.

The Truth Commission in Colombia (Francisco de Roux, Alejandro Valencia Villa, Marta Ruiz Naranjo, Alfredo Molano Bravo posthumous, Alejandro Castillejo, Saúl Alonso Franco, Lucía Victoria González, Patricia Tobón Yagarí, Alejandra Miller, Leyner Palacios, Ángela Salazar Murillo-posthumous, and Carlos Martin Beristain)

Presented by The Left group in the European Parliament



The Truth Commission is one of the three institutions that make up the Colombian Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repitition created under the 2016 peace agreement.

Since it started functioning in 2018, it has worked, to shed light on five decades of atrocities and human rights violations committed during the country's armed conflict. It has advocated for the rights of millions of victims – children, women and men who themselves have fought tirelessly to be heard, for their collective and individual stories of suffering and resistance to be made public, and for their rights to be acknowledged and restored.

The Commission presented its final report on June 28, 2022 and the report's conclusions are essential for building the peace Colombia so desperately needs.

This candidature is to pay tribute to the victims, whose courage and persistence were the basis for the Commission's creation. It is also an opportunity to support the peace process in Colombia, and to highlight the access to truth, justice and reparation for victims as a necessary first step in peacebuilding. Without truth, reconciliation is not possible. Without reconciliation, the risk of repetition remains real.