

Press release – Sakharov Prize 2019: MEPs choose the finalists

Following a joint vote by MEPs in the [Foreign Affairs](#) and [Development](#) committees on Tuesday, the finalists for the 2019 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought are:

- Murdered Brazilian political activist and human rights defender **Marielle Franco**, Native Brazilian leader and environmentalist **Chief Raoni** and Brazilian environmentalist and human rights defender **Claudelize Silva dos Santos**
- **The Restorers**, a group of five students from Kenya – Stacy Owino, Cynthia Otieno, Purity Achieng, Mascrine Atieno and Ivy Akinyi – who have developed i-Cut, an app to help girls deal with female genital mutilation (FGM)
- **Ilham Tohti**, an Uyghur economist fighting for the rights of China's Uyghur minority

Next steps

The European Parliament's [Conference of Presidents](#) (President and political groups' leaders) will select the final laureate on Thursday 24 October. The prize itself will be awarded in a ceremony in Parliament's hemicycle in Strasbourg on 18 December.

Background

The [Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought](#) is awarded each year by the European Parliament. It was set up in 1988 to honour individuals and organisations defending human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Last year, the prize was given to the [Ukrainian film director Oleg Sentsov](#). It is named in honour of Soviet physicist and political dissident Andrei Sakharov and the prize money is 50 000 euros.