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Sakharov Prize

Greens/EFA candidate - Israeli NGO 'Breaking the Silence' - makes Sakharov Prize shortlist

Israeli NGO Breaking the Silence (1), the Greens/EFA proposed candidate, has been chosen for the shortlist for this year's Sakharov Prize (2). After the decision (3), Greens/EFA co-president **Dany Cohn-Bendit** said:

"The Greens/EFA group is delighted with tonight's decision to include our candidate 'Breaking the Silence' on the shortlist for this year's Sakharov Prize. The decision is a fitting recognition of the bravery of all the individuals involved who work to shed light on the injustices of the Israeli occupation and ensure Israeli society does not simply turn a blind eye. While Israel is a democracy, it nonetheless takes enormous courage to speak out and break through the taboos and prejudices surrounding the Israeli occupation. We hope that the Breaking the Silence will now go on to win the award outright when the final decision is taken on Thursday (4)."

(1) Breaking the Silence is an Israeli NGO established in 2004 by Israeli army soldiers and veterans who collect and publish testimonies about their military service in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem during the second Intifada. http://www.shovripmshtika.org/about_e.as

(2) The Sakharov Prize is an annual prize awarded by the European Parliament for 'freedom of thought'. It is intended to honour exceptional individuals who combat intolerance, fanaticism and oppression.

(3) The decision was taken by a vote of a joint meeting of the Foreign Affairs and Development committees of the European Parliament. The shortlist of three also includes Guillermo Farinas of Cuba and Birtukan Mideska of Ethiopia.

(4) The European Parliament Conference of Presidents will decide which of the three shortlisted candidates will win the prize at its meeting on Thursday.

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