

# Article – Sakharov Prize 2019: the finalists

**Marielle Franco**



**Raoni Metuktire**



**Claudelize dos Santos**



**The Restorers**



**Ilham Tohti**



The finalists for this year's Sakharov Prize are:

- Marielle Franco, Chief Raoni and Claudelize Silva dos Santos
- The Restorers
- Ilham Tohti

The finalists were chosen by the [foreign affairs](#) and [development](#) committees on 8 October:

- **Marielle Franco**, a Brazilian political activist and human rights defender, killed in March 2018. A black bisexual woman born in a favela, she was known for defending the human rights of young black people, women, favela residents and LGBTI people. **Chief Raoni**, an emblematic figure of the fight against deforestation in the Amazon. He is one of the leaders of the Kayapo people and has dedicated his life to the fight for indigenous rights and the preservation of the Amazon. **Claudelize Silva dos Santos**, a Brazilian environmentalist and human rights defender. She is known for her stance against illegal lumberers,

ranchers and coal producers in the Praia-Alta Piranheira region.

- **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 helping girls deal with female genital mutilation. The app makes it easier for young women to seek help, find a rescue centre or report the procedure to the authorities.
- **Ilham Tohti**, an Uyghur economist fighting for the rights of China's Uyghur minority. He was sentenced to life imprisonment on separatism-related charges in 2014. He remains a voice of moderation and reconciliation.

Last year the prize was awarded to [Ukrainian film director Oleg Sentsov](#).

### **Next steps**

The [Conference of Presidents](#), which consists of Parliament President David Sassoli and the political group leaders, will select the laureate on 24 October. The prize will be awarded in a ceremony in Parliament in Strasbourg on 18 December.

### **Background**

The [Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought](#), named in honour of the Soviet physicist and political dissident Andrei Sakharov, 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.