

## Article – Sakharov Prize 2019: the nominees



**Alexei Navalny**, a Russian lawyer and political activist. In 2011, he was arrested for the first time for his role in a rally outside the State Duma. He finished second in the 2013 Moscow mayoral election. In 2017, he published a report attacking political corruption and criticising Vladimir Putin and his political allies. This sparked anti-corruption rallies in many Russian cities, which led to the arrest of more than 1,000 demonstrators, including Navalny's. The authorities prevented him from running in the 2018 presidential elections. Navalny was jailed three times in 2018 and 2019 for

violating Russia's strict protest laws.

**Marielle Franco**, a Brazilian political activist and human rights defender who was brutally killed in March 2018. Franco, a black bisexual woman born in a favela, was known for defending the human rights of young black people, women, favela residents and LGBTI people. She also frequently reported extrajudicial executions and other human rights violations committed by police officers and state security forces. Her case remains open.

**Claudelize Silva dos Santos**, a Brazilian environmentalist and human rights defender who became an activist after the brutal killing of her brother and sister-in-law for their efforts to combat deforestation in Brazil's Amazon rainforest. She is known for her stance against illegal lumberers, ranchers and coal producers operating in the Praia-Alta Piranheira region, a remote Amazon settlement.

**Chief Raoni**, an emblematic figure of the fight against deforestation in the Amazon. He is one of the great leaders of the Kayapo people, settled in the heart of the Amazon, and has dedicated his life to the fight for indigenous rights and the preservation of the Amazon.

**Ilham Tohti**, an Uyghur economist fighting for the rights of China's Uyghur minority. He is a proponent of dialogue and advocate for the implementation of regional autonomy laws in China. In 2014, he was sentenced to life imprisonment on separatism-related charges. Despite this, he remains a voice of moderation and reconciliation. Since 2017, more than one million Uyghurs have been detained in a network of internment camps.

**Jean Wyllys**, a Brazilian human rights defender, journalist, lecturer and politician. In 2010, he was elected federal deputy (PSOL party), being the first gay activist to win a seat in Congress. During his two mandates, he tabled laws on equal civil marriage, legalisation of abortion, regulation of sex work, gender identity law, humanised childbirth, legalisation of marijuana and schools free from prejudice. In January 2019, despite his re-election, he did not take office and left Brazil due to death threats. He lives in Europe and travels the world denouncing human rights violations in his country and the regressive policies of the far-right government of President Jair Bolsonaro.

**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 (FGM). The app makes it easier for young women to seek help, find a rescue centre or report the procedure to the authorities. FGM is internationally recognised as a human rights violation. It has been performed on more than 200 million girls and women alive today. Each year more than three million girls are at risk.

## **Next steps**

Based on the official nominations, the foreign affairs and development committees vote on a shortlist of three finalists. Afterwards the Conference

of Presidents – consisting of the President of the European Parliament and the leaders of the political groups – selects the laureate.