# MPEs calls for freedom for Raif Badawi –

# 2015 Sakharov Prize laureate

**Original Script Date:** December 16, 2015

**Script Version:** 1

**Locations:** European Parliament, Strasbourg

**Dates Shot:** December 15, 2015; December 16, 2015

**Sound:** natural with English speech, natural with Arab speech

**Duration:**  03:09

**Source:** S&D group

**Restriction:** none

**Intro**

*Strasbourg, 16th of December* The European Parliament today awarded the 2015 Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought to the Saudi Arabian blogger, writer, activist and creator of the website Free Saudi Liberals, Raif Badawi. Represented by his wife Ensaf Haidar, the jailed human rights activist was honoured by the European Parliament for his fight for freedom of speech and thought in Saudi Arabia. MEPs call on Saudi Arabian authorities to respect freedom of expression and to release Mr Badawi without any condition.

**This high-quality broadcast package contains 2 B-ROLL videos (Arabic/French + EN subtitles), with :**

* Extracts of the Sakharov Prize ceremony
* Interview with **Ensaf Haidar,** wife of Raif Badawi (Arabic + EN subtitles)
* Interview with **Elena Valenciano**, EP Chair of the Human Rights subcommittee of human rights  (French + EN subtitles)

**Shotlist**

FRANCE, STRASBOURG (DECEMBER 16, 2015) (SOCIALISTS AND DEMOCRATS, EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT - ACCESS ALL)

1. CUTAWAY: VARIOUS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN STRASBOURG (EXTERIOR)
2. CUTAWAY: VARIOUS OF THE SAKHAROV PRIZE 2015 IN THE HEMICYCLE
3. ENSAF HAIDAR (RAIF BADAWI’S WIFE, SAKHAROV WINNER 2015) SAYING (ARAB):

“Raif isn’t a criminal, he is not a rapist, he is a thinker and a free spirit. What crime has he committed? It is simply to think differently in a country where only one kind of thought is aloud.”

1. ENSAF HAIDAR ANSWERING JOURNALISTS
2. ENSAF HAIDAR (RAIF BADAWI’S WIFE, SAKHAROV WINNER 2015) SAYING (ARAB):

“Of course, the Sakharov Prize means a lot to me and my husband. I had hoped that he would be here to receive it and that I would be beside him.”

1. ENSAF HAIDAR ANSWERING JOURNALISTS
2. ENSAF HAIDAR (RAIF BADAWI’S WIFE, SAKHAROV WINNER 2015) SAYING (ARAB):

“Raif knows that he has won the Sakharov Prize. He is happy about it but it's a bitter kind of joy. I had hoped that this important prize would have led to his release so he could have received it himself. »

1. ENSAF HAIDAR ANSWERING JOURNALISTS
2. ENSAF HAIDAR (RAIF BADAWI’S WIFE, SAKHAROV WINNER 2015) SAYING (ARAB):

“I send a message to King Salman of Saudi Arabia and Princes Mohammed ben Nayef et Mohammad bin Salman. I want them to know that my husband is a peaceful man, that he is not a terrorist. He expressed himself freely and I hope he will be released so he can join his family in Canada”

1. CUTAWAY: VARIOUS OF A SEMINAR HOSTING ENSAF HAIDAR AND HUMAN RIGHTS STUDENTS

FRANCE, STRASBOURG (DECEMBER 15, 2015) (SOCIALISTS AND DEMOCRATS, EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT - ACCESS ALL)

1. CUTAWAY: ELENA VALENCIANO TALKING TO A JOURNALIST
2. ELENA VALENCIANO (S&D MEP, ES) SAYING (ENGLISH / SPANISH):

“For us, Badawi is a symbol. Religion, repression – he stood up against all that. With his voice, his words and his blog, he tried to push Saudi Arabia towards a more open, democratic and free society.”

1. CUTAWAY: ELENA VALENCIANO TALKING TO A JOURNALIST
2. ELENA VALENCIANO (S&D MEP, ES) SAYING (ENGLISH / SPANISH):

“First, we want Raif Badawi to be released. We would also like Saudi Arabia to understand that we will always support European values, even if we are aware that Saudi Arabia is a necessary partner. “

15. CUTAWAY: ELENA VALENCIANO TALKING TO A JOURNALIST

**Story**

The S&D Group in the European Parliament expressed its great satisfaction at the awarding of the 2015 Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought to the Saudi Arabian blogger, writer, activist and creator of the website Free Saudi Liberals, Raif Badawi today in Strasbourg. European Socialists and Democrats call on Saudi Arabian authorities to respect freedom of expression and to release Mr Badawi without any condition.

**S&D Group president Gianni Pittella said:**

"Instead of being here with us to celebrate this great distinction, Raif Badawi remains in prison because of his campaign for freedom and democracy in Saudi Arabia. It was a great honour to welcome his wife, Ensaf Haider, to our Group meeting yesterday evening; she herself also campaigns for freedom and democracy for Saudi Arabia.

"We fully back Raif and Ensaf's fight for democracy and human rights and call once again on the authorities of Saudi Arabia to release Raif without any conditions and all other political prisoners.

"We take this opportunity to remind everyone, and especially the Saudi Arabian authorities, that the respect for human rights is one of the European Union's fundamental values."

**Richard Howitt MEP, who backed the nomination as S&D Group foreign affairs coordinator and who hosted Ensaf Haidar in Brussels to campaign for her husband's freedom, said:**

"We back Raif's campaign for freedom, freedom for himself, freedom of expression for his country. The awarding of the Sakharov Prize shows we will continue to campaign with Ensaf until Raif is free. We call on His Majesty King Salman to uphold human rights by granting him a pardon. For Ensaf, who is forced to receive this award on behalf of Raif, the one prize she most wants is freedom for her husband. The pain she wants to alleviate is that of the barbaric punishment being meted on him. The pain we hope this prize may also help lift for Ensaf and her children, is that felt from being separated from a husband and a father.

"Ensaf wrote a book - 'Freedom for Raif Badawi, the Love of My Life'. This week we honour her love for him. We honour him. And in awarding this prize, we honour life itself."

**Elena Valenciano, S&D MEP and chair of the subcommittee of human rights added:**

"Raif Badawi's only crime was to express his thoughts pacifically. His aim was only to 'break down the walls of ignorance', promote respect for freedom of speech, and defend the rights of women, minorities and the most vulnerable. His only weapons were his words and for them he got a sentence of 10 years in prison and an inhumane punishment of 1000 lashes.

"Raif Badawi is a symbol for all those in the world who speak out to defend the rights and freedoms of their society in the most difficult of circumstances. It's because of truly valiant people like Raif and Ensaf that the world is a better place."