



**LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE NOMINATION OF LEYLA YUNUS
FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SAKHAROV PRIZE 2014**

Geneva, 6 October 2014

Dear Members of the European Parliament,

By 23 October, you will choose the laureate of the 2014 Sakharov Prize for Human Rights.

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines – Cluster Munition Coalition is calling on you to award the 2014 Sakharov Prize to Leyla Yunus.

Leyla, and her husband Arif founded the Institute for Peace and Democracy in 1995 that has focused on combatting politically motivated prosecutions, corruption, violence against women, and unlawful house evictions. Because of her work, Leyla was arrested on 30 July, and charged with implausible allegations of treason and fraud. She has been very violently harassed in her cell since then, and her health and life are seriously in danger.

We met them in 1999, as they lent their support to our international campaign to ban landmines, and offered to work with the authorities of Azerbaijan to engage them on the need to ban that indiscriminate weapons that had killed so many people in their country as well, notably in the conflict that opposed Azerbaijan and Armenia. They remained engaged on this issue, while becoming increasingly active in fighting against the violations of human rights occurring in Azerbaijan, and defending their victims through mobilizing national assistance for them, as well as circulating information widely about their cases to get international support.

During all these years, with tremendous courage and tireless persistence Leyla and Arif have been at the forefront of the fight to ensure people in Azerbaijan would enjoy the right to speak freely and be protected against persecutions.

Leyla exemplifies personal courage, determination and commitment, when they take precedent over the fear for one's own life to protect human rights and freedom of expression. She would be a very symbolic and highly relevant recipient for the Sakharov Prize. Awarding Leyla the prize will also help protecting her in prison from further violence, as well as protecting her husband Arif, and all the others recorded political prisoners in Azerbaijan.

We count on you and thank you for your support,

Sincerely,
Sylvie Brigot-Vilain
Executive Director