

## Shortlist of nominees

### *Index on Censorship Annual*

### *Freedom of Expression*

### *Awards 2010*

Meeting Judges Panel

Judges Panel 2010

Shaheed Fatima, human rights lawyer; Emily Bell, editor of Guardian.co.uk;  
Caroline Michel, chief executive PFD; Lemn Sissay, poet and writer; Lindsey  
Hilsum, international editor for Channel 4 News.

## Shortlist - Bindmans Law and Campaigning Award - 2010

### 1.3 Memorial Human Rights Centre (Russia/ Chechnya)

*"The situation in our country is not as straightforward as it might appear to the superficial observer. We have many allies in society - both in our struggle for human rights and in our struggle with Stalinism. Moreover, Russian authority is also not as homogeneous as it might seem at first sight."*

- Sergei Kovalev, Founder of Memorial

Memorial is a Russian human rights group that monitors and highlights human rights violations. It follows criminal cases to help bring them to court, compiles lists of missing people, and monitors and documents crimes that take place in Russia, including investigating kidnappings and disappearances. The late Soviet scientist, dissident and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Andrei Sakharov was amongst its founders.

Over the past year, Memorial has come under increasing pressure and its Chechnya office has been targeted. Last July, the respected and courageous activist, Natalya Estemirova, was abducted and brutally murdered. Estemirova was a tenacious investigator of torture and human rights abuses in Chechnya from the Grozny office of Memorial. She was awarded the Robert Schuman Medal, along with Sergey Kovalyov, chairman of Memorial, by five MEPs in European Parliament, as well as the inaugural Anna Politkovskaya Prize from the Reach All Women in War Foundation.

Following Estemirova's murder, Memorial suspended its work in Chechnya but they have since resumed operations. Chechnya remains an extremely dangerous region for human rights activists.

In December 2009, Sergei Kovalev and Oleg Orlov of Memorial received the European Parliament's prestigious annual Sakharov Human Rights Prize for Freedom of Thought (along with Lyudmila Alexeyeva of the Moscow Helsinki Group). The award to Memorial highlights their unwavering commitment and energy in confronting ongoing, serious human rights violations in Russia. Accepting the prize, Sergei Kovalev spoke on behalf of the group. "I am sure that, in awarding the Sakharov Prize to Memorial, the European Parliament had them in mind, first and foremost - our dead friends, comrades-in-arms, kindred spirits. This prize belongs by right to them. And the first name I should cite is that of Natalya Estemirova, human rights defender and fellow member of Memorial, murdered this summer in Chechnya."

"Memorial and this group of activists have set the standard for human rights work in Russia. We are inspired by their fearlessness, vision, and dedication to justice."

- Holly Cartner, Human Rights Watch