

# افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

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European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

Ricken Patel

**Dear amazing Avaazers,**

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If you ever doubt that our efforts together are worth it, or if you're just needing a bit of hope and light in your day, read on.

Bet you won't be able to stop :).

**Avaaz Movement Wins 2016 (So Far!!)**



For years, Icelandic millionaire badboy Kristjan Loftsson has massacred hundreds of endangered giant fin whales. But no more!! Working with allies, a million of us pressed the Dutch

government to close their ports to him, then German Avaazers helped to block ports there too. Then we caused a media and political storm in the Caribbean where Loftsson's ship was registered. After years of pressure, he's called off the hunt!

***"The global pressure brought by the Avaaz community has no doubt played a big role in Loftsson's welcome decision."***

- Vanessa Williams-Grey, Whale and Dolphin Conservation.



Saudi Arabia is a human rights nightmare, but after they bombed schools and hospitals in Yemen, calls rose in Europe for an arms embargo. When EU politicians started to waver under the pressure of powerful Saudi lobbyists, 740,000 Avaazers weighed in, flooding members of parliament with messages and calls. And we won -- for the first time in history, a Western parliament voted to ban arms sales to Saudi Arabia! Now the pressure is on for governments to follow the European lead.

***"We've received calls from Scotland to France to Yemen calling for action, Avaaz played a major role to bring this message to the European Parliament."***

- Alyn Smith, Member of European Parliament



Monsanto's glyphosate weedkiller is everywhere, providing much of the mega-corporation's revenue. So when UN experts said it likely causes cancer, 1.5 million of us called to ban it! With Europe set to re-approve its licence for 15 years, Avaaz delivered our petition and thousands of us sent urgent messages to our governments. In the final hour, support collapsed, and the EU commission was forced to postpone the vote! We'll keep the pressure up until we get the ban our planet needs.

***“The Avaaz campaign helped to raise awareness and concern of the general public about glyphosate. This helped me as a parliamentarian to work on this issue... Stay with us in this fight”***

- Pavel Poc, MEP and Vice Chair of the Environment, Health and Food Safety Committee for the European Parliament.



After horrendous civilian death in Gaza, almost 2 million of us called on 6 major companies to stop profiting from the Israeli military occupation of Palestine. Our movement sent messages to CEOs, held rallies from London to Ramallah, met with government and corporate officials, and

lobbied other countries to cut ties with those companies. And as of last month, 3 of the 6 have pulled out!! It's a tactic that's having impact in the struggle for freedom and peace.

***"The 1.8 million signature Avaaz petition was powerful, and we hope that Avaaz members will continue campaigning."***

- Mahmoud Nawajaa, BDS Civil Society Coordinator in Palestine



Thousands of Syrian children seeking refuge are lost in Europe, without their parents and preyed upon by child traffickers. That's why 40,000 of us donated to fund lawyers to find them, provide legal support, and get them to safety. Dozens of children are already being helped. And just this week, three boys arrived in London and were reunited with their families for the first time in months!

***"Nothing I could say could convey how grateful I truly am to all of you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."***

- One of the boys on arriving in the UK





The Prime Minister of Somalia just joined over a million of us by signing our petition to support a full ban on female genital mutilation! Somali women's rights experts told us that global pressure could help them outlaw female genital mutilation -- but we never imagined that the Somali Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, and dynamic Minister for Women and Human Rights would respond by signing the petition, too! Working with these leaders, UNICEF and survivors, it's now likely that FGM, done to 98% of Somali women, will become illegal!

***"I am committed to outlaw FGM in Somalia through legislation, advocacy, education, and community engagement."***

- Somali Prime Minister, Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmark, as he signed our petition.

### **Shining Our Light in 2016**

These battles are part of deeper struggles -- between forces of love and fear, hope and despair, ignorance and understanding. Sometimes Avaaz campaigns are about shining our movement's light into these struggles, to help shift our culture and politics. Here's some awesome light-shining examples from the last few months:



Inspired by Greek fishermen and pensioners who have saved and cared for thousands of desperate refugee families, Avaaz member, Alkmini, started a petition to nominate these unsung heroes for the Nobel Peace Prize. Then more than 600,000 of us backed the request, and Desmond Tutu endorsed an official submission by 230 academics to the Nobel Committee. This moving story of humanity triumphing over fear captured the world's media from CNN to the BBC.

*"In times when fear and racism are threatening our societies and Europe is raising fences, the big mobilisation of Avaaz members made the voice of humanity echo loudly around the world."*

- Co-Founder of the Leros Solidarity Network, Matina Katsiveli



After decades of silence, 14 brave women just went to court to confront the Guatemalan generals who kept them as sex slaves. As they entered the courtroom we surrounded them with love, delivering messages from over 40,000 Avaaz members across Latin America. The women's courage prevailed and for the first time ever these generals were convicted of crimes against humanity!

*"I was happy to hear the messages of support. I know I'm not alone, and I wanted to uncover my face when I heard that there are people all around the world that support me."*

- One of the women, Doña Rosa



After women were attacked on New Year's Eve in Germany, a flood of racism and xenophobia spread. Refugee men responded by handing out flowers to women on the streets as a show of

respect. To return the gesture and show solidarity and welcome, a hundred female Avaaz members went out to hand flowers back to refugees in Cologne, the site of the attacks. Their video went viral!

***"Refugee men handed out flowers to women as a sign of peace. As Avaaz members we wanted to reciprocate this courageous gesture to show that we counter hate with humanity."***

- Maresa, Avaaz member

Ahhh, that stuff just lifts your heart doesn't it?

The really crazy part is, those stories are a small fraction of our movement's work together over the last few months!

What we're doing matters, we're winning, and we're winning in a way that is building the kind of world we dream of for our children. There is much to do, but this is a moment for gratitude for the 43 million scrumptiously wonderful people in this beautiful movement. What a joy it is to do this together.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!!

With love and gratitude,