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*Plenary sitting*

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**B8-0760/2016**

7.6.2016

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on Tajikistan: situation of prisoners of conscience  
(2016/2754(RSP))

**Charles Tannock, Mark Demesmaeker, Ruža Tomašić, Ryszard Czarnecki, Ryszard Antoni Legutko, Anna Elżbieta Fotyga, Tomasz Piotr Poręba, Raffaele Fitto, Angel Dzhambazki, Arne Gericke, Monica Macovei**  
on behalf of the ECR Group

**B8-0760/2016**

**European Parliament resolution on Tajikistan: situation of prisoners of conscience (2016/2754(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to all its resolutions and EU statements on Tajikistan,
  - having regard to the Council conclusions on the EU Strategy for Central Asia of 22 June 2015,
  - having regard to the statement by the HR/VP on Tajikistan’s Supreme Court’s sentencing of deputy leaders of the Islamic Renaissance Party to life imprisonment on 3 June 2016;
  - having regard to the preliminary observations of the visit to Tajikistan by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression of 9 March 2016,
  - having regard to the UPR recommendations of Tajikistan at the 25th UNHRC session of 6 May 2016,
  - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,
  - having regard to the Regional Conference on Torture Prevention of 27-29 May 2014 and the Regional Conference on the Role of society in the prevention of torture of 31 May - 2 June 2016;
  - having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Tajikistan since the civil war in 1992-1997, during which at least 100,000 people were killed, is the poorest country of Central Asia, deeply dependent on Russia in economic, social and military terms; whereas Russia has moved its forces from the border of Afghanistan to Dushanbe, capital of Tajikistan and is downgrading its 201st division there to a brigade;
- B. whereas in September 2015 Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) was banned after being linked to a failed coup earlier that month led by a General Abdukhalim Nazarzoda, who was killed along with 37 of his supporters;
- C. whereas the closure of IRPT was followed by mass arrests of leaders and members and labelling the party as a terrorist organization; whereas the authorities have already arrested approximately 200 IRPT members;
- D. whereas in addition to the killing of leading opposition figure, Umarali Kuvvatov, in March 2015 in Istanbul, other cases point to the involvement, or at least to its acquiescence, of the Tajik Government outside of its territory; whereas another activist,

Maksud Ibragimov, was stabbed and kidnapped in Russia before being returned to Tajikistan and sentenced in July 2015 to 17 years imprisonment; whereas two others continue to be victims of enforced disappearances – they first disappeared in Russia and Tajikistan in 2015 – and 10 others have been detained in Russia, Belarus, Moldova, and elsewhere based on extradition requests by Tajik authorities;

- E. whereas on 22 May 2016, a constitutional referendum was held in Tajikistan in order to allow incumbent President Emomali Rahmon, a former Soviet official, to run for re-election indefinitely, to the lower minimum age to run for president from 35 to 30, a move which makes his 29-year-old son eligible to stand for office in the next presidential election in 2020, and to ban political parties based on religious platforms;
  - F. whereas on 2 June 2016 the Supreme Court in Dushanbe sentenced Mahmatali Hait and Saidumar Hussaini, deputy leaders of the banned IRPT, to life imprisonment on charges of being behind an attempted coup last year; whereas 11 other IRPT members were sentenced to prison; whereas court proceedings were not transparent and violated the rights of the accused to a fair trial;
  - G. whereas Zaid Saidov, a businessman and well-known opposition figure was sentenced to 29 years in prison in prosecutions linked to his running in the November 2013 presidential elections;
  - H. whereas several lawyers who applied to act as defence attorneys for IRPT defendants have received death threats in addition to being arrested, detained and imprisoned; whereas arrests of Burzugmehr Yorov, Nodira Dodojanova, Nuriddin Mahkamov, Shukhrat Kudratov, Firuz and Daler Tabarov raise concerns about compliance with international standards on the independence of lawyers, closed trials and limited access to legal representation; whereas several journalists have also been detained, harassed and intimidated;
1. Calls for the release of political opposition members and government critics, including Makhmadali Khait, Saidumar Khusaini and other 11 IRPT members as well as Maksud Ibragimov and Zaid Saidov;
  2. Calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all persons detained and sentenced for exercising their right of freedom of expression; urges the Tajik Government to release immediately and unconditionally those imprisoned on politically motivated charges including journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders, such as Buzurgmehr Yorov, Nuriddin Makhkamov, Dilbar Dodojanova, Shukhrat Kudratov, Zaid Saidov, Amindzhon Gulmurodzoda, Abubakr Azizkhodzhaev, Firuz and Daler Tabarov;
  3. Calls on the Tajik Government to allow the IRPT, Group 24, and other peaceful opposition groups to operate freely and exercise the freedoms of assembly, association, expression, and religion, in accordance with international human rights norms and Tajikistan's constitution;

4. Calls for international investigations on all allegations of torture and enforced disappearances, including disclosing the whereabouts of those forcibly disappeared;
5. Welcomes decision of Moldova to reject Tajik extradition requests concerning people that may face torture upon returning to Tajikistan; calls on Belarus to follow suit; calls on Russia not to allow kidnappings and extradition of Tajik citizens persecuted for their political or human rights activities;
6. Expresses a deep concern regarding the pressure on independent media outlets and journalists; urges the Tajik authorities to cease blocking news websites including Facebook, Gmail and Radio Ozodi, the website of Radio Free Europe's Tajik service, and various opposition websites;
7. Welcomes downsizing of Russian troops in Tajikistan; emphasises that the legitimate fight against terrorism should not be used to ban opposition activity and hinder freedom of religion and expression;
8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the VP/HR, the Council, the Commission, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the EU Special Representative for Central Asia, the Governments and Parliaments of the Member States, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the UN Human Rights Council, and the Government and Parliament of Tajikistan as well as governments of Russia and Belarus;