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*Plenary sitting*

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**B8-0518/2017**

12.9.2017

## **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 Laos : notably the cases of Somphone Phimmasonne, Lod Thammavong and Soukane Chaithad  
(2017/2831(RSP))

**Miguel Urbán Crespo, Lola Sánchez Caldentey, Merja Kyllönen, Jiří Maštálka, Malin Björk, Xabier Benito Ziluaga, Estefanía Torres Martínez, Tania González Peñas, Marie-Christine Vergiat, Dimitrios Papadimoulis, Kostadinka Kuneva, Stelios Kouloglou, Kostas Chrysogonos, Kateřina Konečná, Luke Ming Flanagan**  
on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

**B8-0518/2017**

**European Parliament resolution on 2017/2831  
(2017/2831(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous GUE/NGL motion for a resolution “On the situation of rights defenders and opposition activists in Cambodia and Laos” from January 2014,
- having regard to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Human Rights Declaration,
- having regard to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and to the UN Declaration of 18 December 1992 on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the Charter of the United Nations,
- having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas three members of the civil society have been imprisoned since March 2016, for protesting against government policies through the Facebook platform,

B. whereas Phimmasone, Thammavong and Chaithad were living and working in Thailand, whereas they disappeared for days when they came back to their country, and were arrested by the police, some at their parents' house and another one was caught renewing his Thai visa,

C. whereas the charge against them is to have published offensive material against the Government of Laos on Facebook, whereas the sentences filed in the same period of March 2016 range between 20, 16 and 12 years of imprisonment respectively,

D. whereas these members of the civil society have peacefully expressed their opinions through the social medias criticizing the lack of respect for human rights in the country and the problems of corruption and deforestation, whereas Laos is the only country in the region that has not signed the CITES agreement banning illegal trade, whereas illegal trade is an emerging economy in the country,

E. whereas Laotian laws on the use of internet and public speech contain manichaeisms such as "do not distort the truth" until the banning of any critic publication against the State, the Party or the Laws, whereas a Decree and Amendment respectively from September 2014 and the end of the last year, point directly to the media and digital networks,

F. whereas there are ten cases of forced disappearances of activists who were arbitrarily detained in different places inside the country, including Sombath Somphone, a renowned environmental activist, and Somphore Khantisouk, another critical voice against China's mega agro- projects in the country,

G. whereas the names of the other eight forced disappeared in the country, considering the last celebration of the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, are two women, Kingkeo and Somchit, as well as seven men, Soubinh, Souane, Sinpasong, Khamson, Nou, Somkhit, and Sourigna,

1. Requires the Laotian government to comply with its international obligations set forth in the International Treaties, denounces the government for violating these international responsibilities and recalls that it must fulfill its commitments under the human rights treaties it has ratified,

2. Calls on the Government of Laos to address the current repression of civil and political rights, including freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, and to ensure respect for and protection of all human rights activists, minorities and members of civil society and protect the right to religious freedom and conscience,

3. Demands the exculpation of the charges of treason, propaganda against the State and assembly, and the immediate release of the detainees,

4. Urges the Laotian government to respect its international commitments and protect freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, and to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance that Laos signed in 2008,

5. Requires the repeal of the latest Decree and Amendment on the use of the media, which directly attack the individual freedoms of civil society,

6. Urges to make public the content of the discussions and progress made in the Fifth Bilateral Human Rights Dialogue between Australia and Laos in July 2017, particularly those specifically related to the cases of incarceration and enforced disappearance of activists,

7. Calls for the work suspension of the mega press project Don Sahong Dam which will endanger the lives of millions of people in Laos and neighboring countries in the south, violating housing, food, information and participation rights, as well as the rights of the indigenous people and the serious impact on the ecosystem of the Mekong River,

8. Expresses its concern with the large number of unresolved conflicts over land ownership between the State and citizens and the unavailability to obtain detailed information on the types and nature of conflicts, as well as expresses its concern about expropriations and forced evictions without compensation,

9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the ASEAN Secretariat, the UN Secretary-General, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Government and Parliament of Laos.