



Plenary sitting

B8-0521/2017

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 Phimmasone, Lod Thammavong and Soukane Chaithad
(2017/2831(RSP))

Frédérique Ries, Nedzhmi Ali, Petras Auštrevičius, Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Gérard Deprez, Martina Dlabajová, Nathalie Griesbeck, Marian Harkin, Ivan Jakovčić, Petr Ježek, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Louis Michel, Javier Nart, Urmas Paet, Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruiz, Robert Rochefort, Hannu Takkula, Pavel Telička, Ramon Tremosa i Balcells, Ivo Vajgl, Johannes Cornelis van Baalen, Hilde Vautmans, Paavo Väyrynen, Cecilia Wikström, Dita Charanzová, Valentinas Mazuronis, Filiz Hyusmenova
on behalf of the ALDE Group

B8-0521/2017

European Parliament resolution on Laos : notably the cases of Somphone Phimmasone, Lod Thammavong and Soukane Chaithad (2017/2831(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the previous resolution on Laos of 16 January 2014,
 - having regard to the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, specifically articles 19 and 21,
 - having regard to articles 56, 65, and 72 of the Lao criminal code, incompatible with articles 19 and 21 of the ICCPR
 - Having regard to the joint press release by the International Federation for Human Rights and the Lao Movement for Human Rights issued on September 7th 2017,
 - having regard to the opinion adopted on 25 August 2017, by the UN Working group on Arbitrary Detention
 - having regards to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Mr Soukan Chaithad, Ms Lodkham Thammavong and Mr Somphone Phimmasone are three activists who have been working in Thailand , Lodkham as a maid, Somphone as a security guard and Soukan as a delivery driver;
- B. Somphone and Lodkham were arrested in March 2016 at Lodkham’s house in Khammouane province while Soukan ‘‘disappeared’’ when he went to renew his passport at the Ministry of Public Security head office of his hometown, Savannakhet;
- C. Whereas, prior to their return, the three of them had participated in a small peaceful demonstration outside of the Lao embassy in Bangkok on 2 December 2015; Whereas they had posted a number of messages on Facebook criticising the Laos government of corruption, deforestation and human rights violations;

- D. whereas the three were arrested in March 2016 in Laos and have been detained incommunicado for over two months; whereas on 25 May 2016 they appeared on Laos State television confirming that they had been arrested for allegedly being a threat to national security;
- E. whereas the men have been tried in secret on unknown charges in early April 2017 and have been sentenced to 18, 20 and 12 years imprisonment;
- F. whereas the case has been shrouded in secrecy and no details about the trial or charges have been made public;
- G. whereas they are now detained in Samkhe Prison, on the eastern outskirts of Vientiane;
1. calls upon the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Soukan Chaithad, Lodkham Thammavong and Somphone Phimmasone; considers these three activists prisoners of conscience;
 2. demands that the detainees are being treated humanely in full accordance with international standards, including being allowed regular and frequent access to families, lawyers and adequate medical care;
 3. calls upon the government to make public the full details of the charges and criminal proceedings held against them; calls upon the authorities to guarantee an independent and efficient investigation into the persons;
 4. urge the Lao government to immediately conduct a competent, impartial, effective, and thorough investigation into all cases of enforced disappearances and ensure that those responsible for the enforced disappearance are held accountable;
 5. calls the Lao government to take measures to promote a multi-party political system and the rights for individuals to stand for elections without the approval of the LPRP;
 6. demands that the Lao government ends all forms of repression against ethnic and religious minority by complying to article 18 of the ICCPR;
 7. Calls on the EU Delegation in Laos to monitor closely the human rights situation in the country and, specifically, to be present at any proceedings held against Somphone Phimmasone, Lodkham Thammavong and Soukan Chaithad;
 8. 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 European External Action Service, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Government and National Assembly of Laos.