



Plenary sitting

B8-0523/2017

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

Cristian Dan Preda, Ramona Nicole Mănescu, Sandra Kalniete, Pavel Svoboda, Ivan Štefanec, Luděk Niedermayer, Tunne Kelam, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Tomáš Zdechovský, Lefteris Christoforou, Željana Zovko, Marijana Petir, Claude Rolin, Dubravka Šuica, Francis Zammit Dimech, Laima Liucija Andrikienė, Ivana Maletić, László Tőkés, Sven Schulze, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Milan Zver, Michaela Šojdrová, Adam Szejnfeld, Elisabetta Gardini, Roberta Metsola, Joachim Zeller, Eduard Kukan, Seán Kelly, Deirdre Clune, Andrey Kovatchev, Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso, José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra
on behalf of the PPE Group

B8-0523/2017

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 its previous resolutions on Laos,

having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948,

having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,

- having regard to the Cooperation Agreement between the EU and the Lao People's Democratic Republic of 1 December 1997,

having regard to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. whereas three Lao workers arrested last year for criticizing their government on social media while working in Thailand received lengthy prison terms;
 - B. whereas Somphone Phimmasone, Soukan Chaithad, and Lodkham Thammavong had posted numerous messages on Facebook that criticized the government in relation to alleged corruption, deforestation, and human rights violations; whereas the three Lao workers participated in a protest against the government outside the Lao Embassy in December 2015;
 - C. whereas on 25 May 2016, state-run TV showed Somphone Phimmasone, Soukan Chaithad, and Lodkham Thammavong in custody at police headquarters in Vientiane; whereas the news report said the three had been arrested for threatening national security by using social media to tarnish the Government's reputation;
 - D. whereas in 2014, the Government of Laos issued a decree prohibiting online criticism of the Government and the ruling Lao People's Revolutionary Party;
 - E. whereas there are violations of fundamental freedoms, particularly press and media freedom, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, academic freedom and the rights of minorities, taking place in Laos;
1. Strongly condemns the sentencing to prison of Somphone Phimmasone, Soukan Chaithad, and Lodkham Thammavong, and calls for their immediate release;
 2. Notes with concern that the verdicts add to a list of arrests and forced disappearances of activists and protesters who have been critical of issues ranging from land disputes to allegations of corruption and abuse of power;

PE611.443v01-00

3. Reiterates its call on the Government of Laos to respect the rights of free expression and association, and the rights of minorities, and to protect the right to freedom of religion or belief; reminds Laos about its international obligations under the human rights treaties it has ratified;
4. Calls on the Lao authorities to allow specialised UN agencies and representatives of humanitarian organisations unrestricted access, so that they can visit political prisoners, and all ethnic and religious minorities in Laos;
5. 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 governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of Laos, the Secretary-General of ASEAN, and the UN Human Rights Council.