



Plenary sitting

B8-0690/2017

12.12.2017

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 Vietnam : freedom of expression
(2017/3001(RSP))

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

**European Parliament resolution on Vietnam : freedom of expression
(2017/3001(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to previous resolutions of the European Parliament on Vietnam, most notably Resolution P8_TA(2016)0276,
 - having regard to the message by Ambassador Bruno Angelet, Head of the Delegation of the EU to Vietnam of 1 Dec 2017;
 - having regard to the 7th round of the annual Human Rights Dialogue which was held in Hanoi on 1 December 2017;
 - 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 2008 EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders,
 - having regard to the 2013 EU Guidelines on Freedom of Religion or Belief,
 - having regard to the EU- Vietnam Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Partnership and Cooperation of 17 December 2015,
 - having regard of the Vietnamese Penal Code;
 - having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure;
- A. Whereas freedom of expression, religious freedom and civil society activism are highly restricted in Vietnam
- B. Whereas during the Human Rights Dialogue on 1 December 2017, the EU underlined the deterioration of civil and political rights in Vietnam and discussed freedom of expressions, assembly, religion and belief and access to information;
- C. Whereas Ms. Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh has been blogging under her pseudonym Me Nam (Mother Mushroom) and has criticised the Vietnamese government over its human rights violations and corruption. whereas Ms. Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh initially started blogging to share parental advice;
- D. Whereas Ms. Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh was first arrested in 2009 for blogging about government land confiscation related to a Chinese backed bauxite mine. Whereas on 10

October 2016 Ms. Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh was arrested while visiting an imprisoned political activist; whereas Ms. Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh was charged under Article 88 of the penal code, a provision that carries maximum penalties of 20 years in prison for the crime of propagandizing against the state;

- E. whereas on 29 June 2017 she was sentenced to 10 years in prison by a tribunal in Khanh Hoa Province; Whereas on 30 November 2017 the Da Nang Upper Court rejected the appeal of Ms. Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh against this sentence;
- F. Whereas Formosa Ha Tinh, a Taiwanese steel company, was responsible for an illegal discharge of toxic industrial waste into the ocean in April 2016; Whereas Nguyen Van Hoa, a 22 year old Vietnamese journalist, published a video of protests in response to the environmental disaster which killed the marine life and sickened the people along a 120 mile stretch of coastline; whereas Nguyen Van Hoa was arrested on 11 January 2017 and has been held incommunicado in Ha Tinh Province; Whereas Nguyen Van Hoa's arrest was part of a series of arrests by the Vietnamese authorities in the days leading up to the Tet Holiday; whereas Nguyen Van Hoa was arrested and charged for abusing democratic freedoms under Article 258 of the Penal Code; whereas Nguyen Van Hoa was sentenced in November 2019 for 7 years in jail for his reports on the natural disaster;
- G. Whereas the state controls all print and broadcast media and authorities silence critical journalist and bloggers through arrests, prosecutions and other means of harassment; whereas in April 2016 the National Assembly passed a media law which bans prepublication censorship of print and broadcast media and criminalized threats or other actions that interfere with journalistic activities;
- H. Whereas Ms. Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh and Mr. Nguyen Van Hoa are an example of a general trend of attempts to silence the free media; whereas many more journalists and activists have been arrested and harassed over the last years;
- I. Whereas the Vietnamese authorities have used the occasion of the annual EU-Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue and other meetings with the EU to target activists, including in December 2015 when a prominent human rights lawyer was arrested on his way to the EU delegation in Hanoi and in November 2017 when police detained and interrogated human rights activists after they met with an EU delegation;

- J. Whereas according to Human Rights Watch more than 100 political prisoners are held in prison for exercising their right to freedom of expression.
- K. Whereas in April 2016, the National Assembly passed a media law that banned prepublication censorship of print and broadcast media and criminalized threats or other actions that interfere with journalistic activities,
1. Calls upon Vietnam, as an important partner to the European Union, to ensure the respect for human rights, as they are core elements for the ratification of the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement and the EU-Vietnam Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA)",
 2. Expresses its deep concern on the increasingly restrictive approach of the authorities concerning the freedom of expression and other freedoms; Condemns in this regard the use by the authorities of physical and psychological harassment, extra-judicial house arrest, pressure on lawyers, employers, landlords and family members of activists, and the use of intrusive surveillance; Furthermore expresses its deep concern on the restrictions on freedom of movement to prevent bloggers and activists from participating in public events such as human rights discussions and attending trials of fellow activists;
 3. Calls for the immediate release of Ms. Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh and Mr. Nguyen Van Hoa and all other prisoners arrested or convicted for exercising their right to freedom of expression;
 4. Reiterates its urgent call on the Vietnamese authorities to end the practices of selective criminal prosecution and imprisonment of journalists, human rights defenders and others who criticise the government, and to ensure that all persons detained enjoy full due process rights and are covered by fair trial norms;
 5. Strongly insists on the government of Vietnam to reevaluate and repeal all laws and legislation limiting freedom of expression to make sure that this freedom will be protected and for an urgent reform of the justice system to ensure international fair trial standards, as provided for in Article 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
 6. Calls upon Vietnam to sign and ratify all relevant Human Right treaties of the United Nations as well as the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;

7. Calls on ASEAN to truly empower its Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights so it can evaluate the situation concerning the state of human rights in Vietnam;
8. Welcomes the partnership and the human rights dialogue between the EU and Vietnam and recalls the importance of EU-Vietnam human rights dialogue as a key instrument to be used in an efficient manner to accompany and encourage Vietnam in the implementation of the necessary reforms;
9. Calls on the Vietnamese authorities to address the environmental disaster, which caused massive destruction of fish in the region and affected the lives of thousands of people, through legislative measures aimed at restoring and rehabilitating the local economy;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to 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 National Assembly of Vietnam, the governments and parliaments of the ASEAN member states, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.