

Human rights: Liu Xiaobo in China, A. Antonios and D. Isaak in Eritrea, Burundi

MEPs call for the release of Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo and activist Lee Ming-che in China, of Dawit Isaak and Abune Antonios in Eritrea, and for the prevention of violence in Burundi.

- **Chinese authorities should release Liu Xiaobo and Lee Ming-che**
- **Eritrea must free all political prisoners and end crimes against humanity**
- **Escalation of violence in Burundi must be prevented**

China: Parliament calls for the release of human rights defenders

The European Parliament calls upon the Chinese government to immediately release the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo and his wife Liu Xia from house arrest and allow him to seek medical treatment wherever he wishes. The human rights activist has been imprisoned since 2009 for co-writing a manifesto known as “Charter 8”, calling for fundamental reforms, and is being denied to move outside China for treatment of his late-stage liver cancer.

MEPs also call for the release of Lee Ming-che, a Taiwanese pro-democracy social media activist, who has been detained on 19 March 2017 in China and is since missing, allegedly under investigation on suspicion of “engaging in activities that endanger national security”.

Parliament is highly concerned by the Chinese government’s “continued efforts to silence civil society actors” with the help of new laws on state security, counterterrorism, cybersecurity, and foreign NGO management. In a resolution adopted on Thursday, it calls upon the EU to keep raising the issue of human rights violations in its political dialogues in order to make China live up to its international human rights commitments.

Eritrea: End arbitrary detention and gross human rights violations

MEPs call for the immediate release of Dawit Isaak, journalist and laureate of the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize in 2017, who was arrested in Eritrea in 2001 and last heard from in 2005. They demand that the Eritrean government should end the practice of arbitrary detention and release all prisoners of conscience, including Abune Antonios, Patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Church, who is imprisoned since 2007.

In a resolution, Parliament condemns “in the strongest terms Eritrea’s systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations”, the ban of independent media, harsh detention conditions amounting to torture, persecution on the basis of religion, forced labour in the national service on a mass scale, and sexual abuse of women conscripts, and reminds the Eritrean Government that “many of its activities constitute crimes against humanity”.

MEPs further denounce the resumption of major EU aid to Eritrea. They call upon the EU Commission to “carefully consider” Parliament’s concerns and to “ensure that the funding is strictly assigned to meeting the needs of the Eritrean people for development, democracy, human rights, good governance and security”.

Burundi: Fear for escalation of the political crisis

MEPs are deeply concerned about the political and security situation in Burundi and about the widespread immunity for perpetrators of violence, including security forces and authorities who have allegedly killed more than 1 200, tortured thousands and arrested more than 10 000 people since 2015 in a government crackdown on those opposing the re-election of President Nkurunziza for a third term, in violation of the constitution.

Following the [recent statement by ACP-UE JPA co-chair Louis Michel](#), Parliament fears “spiralling violence and a possible escalation of the crisis along ethnic lines”, fuelled by government propaganda and rallies of the ruling party CNDD-FDD’s youth militia. In a resolution, it calls for effective action to prevent violence and a national dialogue to rebuild trust and national unity, and urges the Burundian government to cooperate with the UN commission of inquiry and the EAC negotiations for a solution to the conflict.

The political deadlock and the deteriorating economic situation are having serious consequences for the population of Burundi, where more than 200 000 people have fled their homes and three million are in need of humanitarian aid, MEPs state, urging the EU and other donors to step up funding.

Further information

[Adopted texts will be available here \(click on 6 July\)](#)

[Video recording of debates \(click on 06.07.2017\)](#)

[Procedure file: Cases of Nobel laureates Liu Xiaobo and Lee Ming-che](#)

[Procedure file: Eritrea, notably the cases of Abune Antonios and Dawit Isaac](#)

[Procedure file: Burundi](#)

Political groups

[News pages of the EPP group](#)

[News pages of the S&D group](#)

[News pages of the ECR group](#)

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[News pages of the GUE/NGL group](#)

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