



Human rights: China, Nicaragua and Laos, and Vietnam

Parliament on Thursday adopted three human rights resolutions: urging the Chinese government to adopt an immediate and unconditional moratorium on the death penalty, calling on President Ortega to respect the constitution of Nicaragua and urging the authorities in Laos and Vietnam to release all human rights defenders, political prisoners and prisoners of conscience.

China

MEPs recognise the positive move by the Supreme People's Court, in January 2007, to review death sentences whilst deploring the fact that this has not led to a significant decrease in the number of executions. To this end, MEPs press the Chinese Government to adopt an immediate and unconditional moratorium on the death penalty and strongly condemn the executions carried out following the events in March 2008 in Lhasa and the riots of 5-7 July 2009 in Urumqi.

China is urged once again to ratify the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, whilst MEPs deplore the often "discriminatory treatment of ethnic and religious minorities" in the country.

MEPs additionally appeal to the Chinese authorities to develop a genuine Han-Uighur dialogue, adopt more inclusive and comprehensive economic policies in Xinjiang and protect the cultural identity of the Uighur population. Parliament also calls for the reopening of sincere and results-orientated dialogue between the Chinese Government and the Dalai Lama's representatives.

Nicaragua

The European Parliament condemns and deplores "all the threats, insults and intimidation to which the Liberal International delegation headed by the MEP Johannes Cornelis van Baalen was subjected, and expresses its solidarity with its members." During a visit to Nicaragua, the Dutch MEP was even threatened with expulsion from Nicaragua by the Sandinista authorities and declared *persona non grata*.

"The numerous attacks and acts of harassment to which human rights organisations and their members and independent journalists have been subjected by individuals, political forces and bodies linked to the state", are highlighted in the resolution.

Deputies call on the Nicaraguan president Ortega to respect the Constitution which does not allow two successive presidential mandates and deplore the way the last local elections on 9 November 2008 were conducted. As a consequence the resolution calls for an EU election observation mission to be sent to monitor the forthcoming presidential elections.

The resolution on Nicaragua was supported by the EPP, ALDE and ECR groups while the S&D, the Greens/EFA and GUE/NGL announced they would not participate in the vote.

Laos

MEPs welcome the recent ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by the Laotian Government.

Press release

The resolution repeats the demand for the immediate release of the leaders of the "Student Movement of 26 October 1999" and of all those arrested during the attempted peaceful demonstrations on 2 November 2009.

Parliament also calls on the Thai authorities to release 158 Lao Hmong refugees currently in detention and allow them to resettle in Thailand or in the United States, Canada, the Netherlands or Australia, which have already agreed to take them in.

Vietnam

MEPs condemn the reported violent expulsion of more than 150 monks and nuns from monasteries and call for an end to all persecution and harassment of Buddhists. They also demand the unconditional release of Thich Quang Do and a re-establishment of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam and of its dignitaries.

The Vietnamese Government is urged to curb its violations of freedom of expression, freedom of religion and freedom of assembly. Moreover, the resolution requests a binding and unambiguous clause on human rights and democracy to be incorporated into the current negotiations on the new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Vietnam.

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