

Human rights: EU seamen detained in India, Ethiopia and North Korea nuclear test

Plenary sessions [21-01-2016 - 17:09]

Parliament calls on India to release the 14 Estonian and 6 Briton seamen detained in the south of the country, strongly condemns the nuclear test conducted on 6 January by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and deplores the recent use of excessive force by security forces in Ethiopia, in three resolutions voted on Thursday.

Estonian and UK seamen detained in India

MEPs call on the Indian authorities to release the 35-strong crew - including 14 Estonians and 6 Britons - of the Merchant Vessel Seaman Guard Ohio, who were arrested in India's southern state of Tamil Nadu in October 2013 and charged with illegally possessing weapons. The defendants claim to have been on an anti-piracy mission and have consistently denied any wrongdoing. The charges were rapidly quashed, but the Indian authorities appealed, forbidding the seamen to leave the country.

Earlier this month, each of the 35 sailors and guards was sentenced to a maximum term of five years' "rigorous imprisonment". They are considering whether to appeal against the sentences within the prescribed 90 days. Whilst recognising the integrity of the Indian legal system, Parliament urges the authorities to release all those concerned pending the conclusion of the judicial process.

Situation in Ethiopia

Parliament strongly condemns the recent use of violence by the security forces and the increased number of cases of human rights violations in Ethiopia. It calls for a credible, transparent and independent investigation into the killings of at least 140 protesters and into other alleged human rights violations in connection with the protest movement after the May 2015 federal elections in the country.

It also calls on the Ethiopian authorities to stop suppressing the free flow of information, to guarantee the rights of local civil society and media and to facilitate access throughout Ethiopia for independent journalists and human rights monitors. The EU, as the single largest donor, should ensure that EU development assistance is not contributing to human rights violations in Ethiopia,

Recent nuclear test by North Korea

MEPs call for meaningful and effective sanctions to be decided upon by the international community following the nuclear test of 6 January 2016 by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). They call the test an unnecessary and dangerous provocation, a violation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and a serious threat to peace and stability.

Desiring a diplomatic and political solution to the DPRK nuclear issue, MEPs ask the state authorities to abandon nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and to cease all related activities.

Parliament condemns the "systematic, widespread and grave violations of human rights", the severity of food shortages and tough restrictions on the freedoms of thought, conscience, religion or belief, opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association in the country. It asks the DPRK government immediately to end its use of the systematic

Press release

suppression of human rights as a political tool to control and monitor its own population. It is time now for the international community to take concrete action to end the perpetrators' impunity and bring them before the International Criminal Court, it adds.

Political groups

- News page of the EPP group: <http://www.eppgroup.eu/press-releases>
- News page of the S&D group: <http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/newsroom>
- News page of the ECR group: <http://ecrgroup.eu/news/>
- News page of the ALDE group: <http://www.alde.eu/press/press-and-release-news/>
- News page of the GUE/NGL group: <http://www.guengl.eu/news/archives/category/gue-ngl-news>
- News page of the Greens/EFA group: <http://www.greens-efa.eu/press/70-press-releases.html>
- News page of the EFDD group: <http://www.efdgroup.eu/newsroom/press-releases>

Further information

- Adopted text will be available here (click on 21.01.2016)
: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/texts-adopted.html>
- Video recording of debate (click on 21.01.2016)
: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/plenary/search-by-date>

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