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## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Laos and Vietnam

**Sarah Ludford, Marielle De Sarnez**  
on behalf of the ALDE Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Laos and Vietnam**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the EU Annual Report on Human Rights 2008,
- having regard to its resolution on the new EU-Vietnam Partnership and Cooperation and Human Rights Agreement adopted in October 2008,
- having regard to the letter sent by the chair of its Subcommittee on Human Rights to the Ambassador of Vietnam, expressing her deep concern regarding information received concerning recent events and developments at the Ba Nha Monastery and at Phuoc He Temple,
- having regard to its previous resolutions on Laos, in particular those of 14 November 2001 on the arbitrary arrests and the political situation in Laos and 1 December 2005 on the human rights situation in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam,
- having regard to the Cooperation Agreement between the EU and the Lao PDR of 1 December 1997, based on “respect for democratic principles and fundamental human rights as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”,
- having regard to Article 122(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

***Vietnam***

- A. whereas following its Universal Periodic Review before the UN Human Rights Council on 24 September 2009, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam rejected 21 of the 36 recommendations made by European Union Member States for the practical promotion of human rights;
- B. whereas over recent months instances of religious persecution have increased, especially against Buddhists and Catholics, and whereas the government is increasingly resorting to violence,
- C. whereas 150 Buddhists from the Thich Nhat Hanh Buddhist bonze community were forcefully expelled by the police from their monastery of Bat Nha (in the province of Lam Dong) on 27 September 2009, and whereas hundreds of others have been driven to leave as a result of police harassment,
- D. whereas the repression against the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam remains chronic; its members are harassed, kept under surveillance and interrogated by the police on a daily basis,

- E. whereas the dignitaries of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam have virtually all been imprisoned, starting with its Patriarch Thich Quang Do (aged 81), the most eminent of the Vietnamese dissidents, who has been detained for more than 27 years, currently in his monastery of Zen Thanh Minh in Ho Chi Minh City,
- F. whereas Vietnam, which will assume the chair of ASEAN in 2010, must set an example by improving its human rights practices: the government could start by releasing the hundreds of peaceful government critics, independent church activists, bloggers, and democracy advocates imprisoned in violation of international law on groundless national security charges for expressing peaceful dissent,

### ***Laos***

- G. welcoming the ratification on 29 September 2009 by the Lao People's Democratic Republic of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees in particular the people's right to freedom of faith, freedom of association, freedom of speech and of the press, as well as the right to demonstrate and political rights,
- H. whereas almost one month after the 10th anniversary of the "26th October 1999 movement" launched by students and teachers of Vientiane, the main leaders of the movement, Thongpaseuth KEUAKOUN, Seng-Aloun PHENGPHANH, Bouavanh CHANMANIVONG and KEOCHAY, are still being held in secret detention,
- I. whereas on 2 November 2009 more than 300 people, who were preparing for a peaceful demonstration in Vientiane, in order to demand « respect for human rights » and "a multiparty system", were apprehended by the "secret police" of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and whereas nine of them, Ms Kingkèo and Ms Somchit, Messrs. Soubinh, Souane, Sinpasong, Khamsoné, Nou, Somkhith and Sourigna, are still being held in custody,
- J. whereas serious doubts still remain as to the 'voluntary' nature of the 'repatriation' to Laos of thousands Lao-Hmong civilians lodged in camps in Thailand, in particular that of 158 Lao-Hmong people, including 85 children, held for more than 1,100 days at the detention centre in Nongkhai,
- K. extremely concerned about the general political situation in Laos which has been ruled by a single party in power since 1975, and whose population – among the poorest on earth – lives in the total absence of any democracy or rights,

### ***Vietnam***

- 1 Notes the reported violent expulsion of more than 150 monks and nuns from these monasteries and that the increasingly tense situation following these actions against the peaceful Buddhist community is in clear contradiction with the commitments regarding compliance with internationally accepted standards on freedom of religion, especially in terms of people peacefully attempting to exercise their rights, which the

Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has undertaken as a member of the UN Security Council and future chair of ASEAN;

- 2 Requests that, within the framework of the current negotiations on the new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Vietnam, the Commission and the Council include a binding and unambiguous clause on human rights and democracy, together with a mechanism allowing for its implementation in order to put an end to systematic violations of democracy and human rights;
- 3 Calls on the Vietnamese Government to respect its international obligations with regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 1 of the 1995 European Union-Vietnamese Cooperation Agreement;
- 4 Urges the cessation of all persecution and harassment and insists that monks and nuns be allowed to practice Buddhism according to the tradition of the community of the Buddhist bonze Thich Nhat Hanh in Bat Nha and elsewhere;
- 5 Urges the cessation of religious persecution, which implies recognition of all religious communities, the free practice of religion and the restitution of assets arbitrarily seized by the State from the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam and the Catholic Church;
- 6 Demands the unconditional release of Thich Quang Do and the re-establishment of the legal status of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam and of its dignitaries;

#### ***Laos***

- 7 Calls on the Laotian authorities to respect the terms of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and to harmonise without delay Laotian law with the aforementioned Covenant that Laos has recently ratified;
- 8 Reiterates its demand for the immediate release of the leaders of the "Student Movement of 26 October 1999" as well as of all the prisoners of conscience held in Laos, and entrusts its competent delegation with the responsibility for following up this matter;
- 9 Calls on the Laotian authorities to release unconditionally all those people arrested during the attempted peaceful demonstration on 2 November 2009;
- 10 Calls on the Laotian authorities to defer all repatriation of civilians of Lao-Hmong who fled to Thailand in fear of their safety and their lives, and who were recognised as political exiles by the UN High Commission for Refugees;
- 11 Reiterates its demand to the Laotian authorities to devise and implement as soon as possible all the reforms necessary in order to bring democracy to the country, to guarantee the right to peaceful expression of political opposition and to ensure that

internationally-monitored multi-party elections take place soon, with a view to national reconciliation;

***General***

- 12 Calls on the Commission to closely monitor the situation of the Lao-Hmong community and the government's programmes for ethnic minorities;
- 13 Calls on the Council and Commission to fully involve Parliament in the work of the EU-Vietnam and EU-Laos Working Groups on Institution Building, Administrative Reform, Governance and Human Rights;
- 14 Calls on the Council and the Commission to make a detailed assessment of the implementation policies conducted in Laos and Vietnam since the signing of the association and cooperation agreements, mindful of Article 1 of these agreements, which reiterates that respect for democratic principles and fundamental rights is an essential element of the agreements, and to report back to Parliament;
- 15 Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the governments and parliaments of Laos and Vietnam.