

15.5.2000

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the debate on topical and urgent subjects of major importance pursuant to Rule 50 of the Rules of Procedure

by SCHORI, SAKELLARIOU and LINKHOR

on the kidnappings in the Philippines

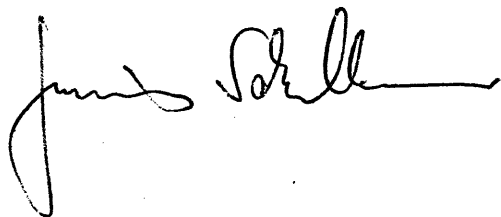
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The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Philippines;
- having regard to the visit of the High Representative of the EU, Mr Javier Solana, to the Philippines;
- A. Whereas political tension in the southern island of Mindanao and neighbouring islands, since the 1970's has intensified in recent months;
- B. Whereas sporadic peace talks between the Philippine government and the largest armed Islamic separatist group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) have continued to falter, amid hostilities on both sides;
- C. Whereas in January 2000, President Estrada announced an extension (until the end of June) of the deadline for the conclusion of the peace talks and called for "all out war" if these talks fail;
- D. Whereas on the 1st of May the MILF has announced that negotiations would be suspended indefinitely and blamed the government for an escalation in military attacks;
- E. Whereas armed opposition groups and other vigilante groups in Mindanao have been responsible, in recent years, for human rights abuses, including hostage-taking and killings;
- F. Whereas the Philippine armed forces have also committed human rights violations in the context of counter-insurgency operations, including extra-judicial executions, torture, "disappearances" and indiscriminate killings of civilians;
- G. Whereas the Abu Sayyaf group, one of the two armed opposition groups fighting for a separate Islamic State is responsible for the kidnapping of 21 people from the remote resort island of Sipadan in eastern Malaysia;

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- H. Whereas most of those abducted are Malaysians, but they also include 7 European citizens; 2 French, 3 German, 2 Finns and 2 South Africans, a Lebanese and 2 Filipinos;
- I. Believes firmly that taking innocent civilian hostages is an appalling abuse of human rights;
1. Firmly condemns the kidnappings on the Island of Jolo and calls on those responsible to release all hostages immediately;
 2. Sympathises with the families of the hostages;
 3. Felicita la decisión de la Unión Europea de enviar a su Alto Representante en una misión humanitaria para interesarse por la situación de los ciudadanos europeos, secuestrados por la guerrilla islámica filipina y por una solución rápida y pacífica del secuestro;
 4. Asks the Council and its Member States to help the government of the Philippines to explore all possible avenues in order to resolve the matter peacefully and avoid harming the victims in any way;
 5. Invites the Council and the Commission to assist the government of the Philippines, by implementing an long term assistance programme aimed at easing the tensions in the southern island of Mindanao and the neighbouring islands;
 6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative of the EU, the Secretary General of the UN, the government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.



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