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## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 50 of the Rules of Procedure

by Patrica McKenna, Marie-Anne Isler Béguin and Monica Frassoni

on behalf of the Green/EFA Group

on the absence of the freedom of religion in Vietnam and the deliberate elimination of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV)

PE 338.631

**European parliament resolution on the absence of the freedom of religion in Vietnam and the deliberate elimination of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV)**

*The European parliament,*

- considering its previous resolutions on the serious violations of the fundamental freedoms in Vietnam;

- considering the report on the situation of human rights in the world in 2002;

A. considering that the freedom of religion is one of the fundamental freedoms defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and guaranteed by various international conventions to which Vietnam is party;

B. underlining the fact that the EU-Vietnam Co-operation Agreement is explicitly founded on the respect of the fundamental rights as defined in the above-mentioned conventions;

C. considering also that despite the repeated declarations of the Vietnamese authorities, the situation of the fundamental freedoms in Vietnam, especially of the freedom of religion, remains extremely worrying;

D. regretting deeply that the unexpected and widely publicised meeting on 2 April of this year between the Prime Minister Phan Van Khai and the Venerable Thich Huyen Quang, Patriarch of the (outlawed) Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, has not been followed by a radical change in the policy and behaviour of the Vietnamese authorities, but by the resumption and intensification of the repression of the UBCV, as well as by the continuing persecution of other non-recognised confessions such as the Protestant Churches of the Montagnards or the Hoa Hao Buddhist Church;

E. recalling that the Venerable Thich Huyen Quang, Patriarch of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, has for the last twenty years been detained in internal exile without trial, while during the same period the Venerable Thich Quang Do has been detained either in prisons or re-education camps or kept under house arrest;

F. recalling that in October of this year, in the Nguyen Thieu Monastery (province of Binh Dinh), the UBCV held its first assembly since it was banned in 1982, discussing important religious questions and electing new leaders;

G. noting that the Vietnamese authorities at first tried to prevent the assembly from being held through the use of force, then mounted an operation of intimidation lasting ten hours against the leaders of the UBCV, and finally arrested the leaders, harassed the faithful, and isolated the pagodas;

H. deploring the decision to place the Patriarch Thich Huyen Quang and the Venerable Thich Quang Do under house arrest, and the immediate condemnation of the Venerables Thich Tue Sy, Thich Thanh Huyen, and Thich Nguyen Ly, as well as the

personal assistant of the Patriarch, the Venerable Thich Dong Tho, to two years' administrative detention by written order of the People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City, and the condemnation of four other monks, Thich Thien Hanh, Thich Vien Dinh, Thich Thai Hoa and Thich Nguyen Vuong, to two years' administrative detention by "verbal" order of the authorities of Hue and of Ho Chi Minh City;

I. noting with concern that on this occasion Thich Huyen Quang and Thich Quang Do were accused arbitrarily of being in possession of "state secrets", an offence which is punishable by the death penalty;

J. condemning the abduction by the Vietnamese security services of the UBCV monk Thich Tri Luc, carried out on 25 July 2002 in Cambodia, and his subsequent secret detention for one year, despite the fact that he had obtained the protection of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, his forthcoming trial for "having fled abroad", and the lies of the Vietnamese government on this affair;

K. recalling the condemnation of Father Nguyen Van Ly and three of his relatives as well as the continual repression suffered by the Christian Montagnards and the Hoa Hao Buddhist Church;

1. strongly condemns the new and more serious wave of repression of the religious freedom of the UBCV and of the Christian Montagnards in Vietnam and the deliberate and carefully planned policy of the Vietnamese regime for the elimination of non-recognised Churches, especially of the UBCV, which represents 80% of the Vietnamese people;

2. calls on the Vietnamese authorities to put an immediate end to the policy of repression of the UBCV and of the Christian Montagnards and to guarantee all these Churches a legal status and full religious freedom, beginning by re-establishing the right to existence of the UBCV;

3. calls on the Vietnamese government to release immediately all Vietnamese citizens detained as a result of their faith, their religious practices or simply their attachment to the freedom of religion, beginning with the Venerable Thich Huyen Quang, Patriarch of the UBCV, and the Venerable Thich Quang Do, his number two;

4. invites the Commission to place the question of the freedom of religion in Vietnam at the top of the agenda for the meeting of the mixed EU-Vietnam Committee which will take place in Brussels on 21 November;

5. calls on the Council and the Commission to use all political and diplomatic means to ensure that the freedom of religion finally becomes a reality in Vietnam;

6. calls on the diplomatic representations of the European Union and of its Member States in Vietnam to follow the case of the dignitaries of the UBCV imprisoned or kept under house arrest, to pay particular attention to the situation of religious freedom in the country, and to co-ordinate their efforts to promote this freedom in a concrete manner;

7. calls on its competent bodies to decide on a delegation of the European Parliament to visit Vietnam, to appraise the religious situation, especially that of the UBCV, and to

meet its leaders, first and foremost the Patriarch Thich Huyen Quang and the Venerable Thich Quang Do;

8. warmly congratulates the heads of the UBCV for the high moral qualities, the determination and the constancy which they have shown in their long non-violent struggle for the affirmation of the freedom of religion, human rights and democracy in Vietnam;

9. instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the President, the Prime Minister, and the President of the People's Assembly of Vietnam, the Patriarch and the number two of the UBCV, the Secretary General of the United Nations and the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations on the freedom of religion.