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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 115 of the Rules of Procedure

by István Szent-Iványi, Marios Matsakis,

on behalf of the ALDE Group

on the situation in Fiji

European Parliament resolution on the situation in Fiji

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolution on the situation in Fiji,
 - having regard to the EU Presidency Statement of 5 December 2006 on the military coup in Fiji,
 - having regard to the statement of 5 December 2006 by the UN Secretary-General on military's seizure of power in Fiji,
 - having regard to the declaration by the High Commissioner for human rights of 6 December 2006,
 - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Fiji's recent history has been marked by several coups due to ethnic tensions between the indigenous Fijians and the Indo-Fijians brought to the country by the former colonial power and this coup was the fourth in 20 years,
- B. whereas the military had been threatening to topple the elected government for weeks, accusing it of corruption and ruining the country,
- C. whereas the leader of this coup is increasingly isolated as his hand-picked Prime Minister said the move was illegal, the nation refused to back him and the international community expressed disdain,
- D. whereas at least two newspapers have stopped publishing, the state-owned broadcast media have suspended their news programmes and foreign journalists have been prevented from covering some events,
- E. whereas development aid to the Fiji Islands (equivalent to more than EUR 20 million under the 9th European Development Fund) was restored by the EU in 2004, and is allocated mainly to educational and infrastructural projects,
- F. whereas respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law constitute an essential element of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement which governs relations between ACP States and the European Union,
1. Firmly condemns this military overthrow of an elected government;

2. Strongly believes that in a democracy, the military must be subordinate to the elected civilian leadership;
3. Demands that the military forces stand back and give way to the democratically elected political government of Prime Minister Qarase;
4. Stresses that the peaceful opposition to the military regime starts to take shape, after ousted Prime Minister's call to peaceful resistance and with both the Great Council of chiefs and influential church groups denouncing the coup;
5. Condemns the undisguised hostility of Fiji's armed forces to press freedom and the privately-owned media after they staged a coup.
6. Calls on the United Nations, the European Union and countries in the region to move quickly to obtain the restoration of freedoms, including that of the media;
7. Considers it essential that the rule of law is restored and that the political rights of all ethnic groups in Fiji are respected;
8. Calls on the Commission and Member States to closely monitor the situation in Fiji and, where appropriate, to start consultations under Article 96 of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, which could lead to a partial or full suspension of EU development assistance;
9. Notes the recent decision of the Commonwealth to suspend Fiji from its decision-making councils;
10. Recommends to the European Union to suspend a cooperation accord signed with Fiji in 2000 as part of the ACP-EU framework;
11. Recalls the Fiji held general elections in May 2006, which were deemed credible by international observers, including notably a substantial European Union Election Observation Mission;
12. Recalls that the coalition government formed by Prime Minister Qarase following the elections has full democratic legitimacy as well as a very large majority in Parliament;
13. Stresses that the future of Fiji's multi-ethnic society depends on credibility and legitimacy of democratic institutions;
14. Stresses the growing importance of the Pacific region for the EU, and the intention to devote more attention to developments in the area;
15. Supports efforts by the Pacific Islands Forum and other regional and international actors towards the resolution of the conflict and to achieve political stability in the

country;

16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Member States, the ACP-EU Joint Assembly, the governments of the member states of the Commonwealth and the authorities of Fiji.