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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 Gintaras Didžiokas, Hanna Foltyn-Kubicka, Michał Tomasz Kamiński,
Adam Bielan, Mieczysław Edmund Janowski, Ryszard Czarnecki,

on behalf of the UEN Group

on human rights in Vietnam

European Parliament resolution on human rights in Vietnam

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Vietnam, in particular that of 23 of November 2005 on the situation in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam,
 - having regard to the cooperation agreement of 1995 between the EU and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam,
 - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas scores of human rights defenders, democratic activists, lawyers, journalists, trade unionists and religious leaders have been arrested over the past months and many condemned to harsh prison sentences,
- B. whereas religious repression has also increased against members of un-recognized religious movements such as the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV), Hoa Hao and Protestants all over Vietnam, noting that UBCV leader Venerable Thich Quand Do is spending his 26th year under house arrest for his appeals for democracy of human rights,
- C. whereas this wave of repression follows a brief period of modest democratic opening prior to the APEC Summit in Hanoi in November 2006, when Vietnam's leaders were seeking membership of the WTO, the Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) status with the US and removal from the US State department's blacklist of Countries of Particular Concern for religious freedom violations,
- D. whereas opposition parties, independent media and labour unions, as well as unsanctioned religious organisations are strictly banned by the one-party Communist state,
- E. whereas Catholic priest Father Nguyen Van Ly and many other pro-democracy activists were charged under Article 88 of Vietnam's Criminal Code, concerning vaguely-defined and catch-all 'national security' offences, which in July 2002 was denounced by the UN Human Rights Committee as "incompatible" with international human rights law;
- F. whereas on 6 June 2006 the Government adopted regulations on "Administrative sanctions on Cultural and Information activities" (Decree 26/2006-ND-CP, effective from 1 July 2006) which enable the authorities to punish offences and impose fines for circulating "harmful" information by any means (internet, press, radio), while leaving the definition of "harmful information" up to the local authorities or Police;

1. Demands the immediate release of all Vietnamese political prisoners and prisoners of conscience detained for having legitimately and peacefully exercised their rights to freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, freedom of the press and freedom of religion;
2. Regrets that the crackdown on peaceful political dissent started shortly after Vietnam had secured the accession to the WTO, the Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) status with the US and the removal from the religious blacklist of Countries of Particular Concern;
3. Condemns Vietnam's unlawful methods of political, religious and ethnic repression and calls on the Government to undertake serious, long-term political and institutional reforms leading to democracy and the rule of law, starting by permitting all currents of opinion to express their views;
4. Calls on the Vietnamese authorities to end all forms of repression of members of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam and officially recognise the latter's existence and that of other non-recognised traditional churches in the country;
5. Urges the Vietnamese Government repeal the provisions of Article 88 of the Vietnam's Criminal Code concerning 'national security' offences as well as regulations on "Administrative sanctions on Cultural and Information activities";
6. Calls on the Commission and the Council to review all financial aid to Vietnam in the framework of cooperation agreement of 1995, in order to promote the effective protection of the rights of the Vietnamese people and the strengthening of the rule of law;
7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the ASEAN and ASEM member states, the UN Secretary-General, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Government and Parliament of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.