

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Session document

21.10.2008

B6-0553/2008

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 Mieczysław Edmund Janowski, Inese Vaidere, Marek Aleksander Czarnecki, Adam Bielan, Ewa Tomaszewska

on behalf of the UEN Group

on Violation of human rights in Venezuela

European Parliament resolution on Violation of human rights in Venezuela

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the report by Human Rights Watch on the situation of human rights in Venezuela over the past decade,
- having regard to its previous resolutions on Venezuela,
- having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. whereas last September Mr Julio Soto, leader of the juvenile movement of the party "Copei" was killed in strange circumstances in his car in Maracaibo,
- B. whereas the Venezuelan government expelled José Miguel Vivanco, Americas director at Human Rights Watch and Americas deputy director Daniel Wilkinson on 18 September 2008 after they held a news conference in Caracas to present a report on the situation of human rights in Venezuela,
- C. whereas this report describes how the government of President Hugo Chavez has weakened democratic institutions and human rights guarantees in Venezuela,
- D. whereas some electoral lists close to the opposition party have been illegally excluded from participating in the next electoral round, taking place in November 2008,
- E. whereas such facts are only the last of a long series of acts adopted by the government aiming at intimidating the voice of opposition, dissidents and international observers in the country,
- D. whereas the attitude of Chavez government over the past ten years has missed the opportunity to shore up the rule of law and strengthen the protection of human rights presented by the enactment of a new Constitution in 1999,
 - 1. Strongly condemns the assassination of the juvenile leader Mr Soto; expresses its deep condolences to his family and calls on the Venezuelan authorities to conduct a prompt investigation and punish the responsible of this crime;
 - 2. Is concerned by the recent expulsion of the two senior officials of Human Rights Watch which is an independent, nongovernmental organization, not subsidized by any country;

3. Is deeply concerned by the deterioration of the respect of human rights as well as fundamental liberties in Venezuela as they are guaranteed in the 1999 Constitution; considers that the government is using the two days 2002 coup as a pretext to undercut the human rights protection enshrined in the Constitution;
4. Is concerned by the content of the report presented by Human Rights Watch which shows that the Venezuelan government under President Chávez
 - a) has tolerated, encouraged and engaged in wide ranging acts of discrimination against political opponents and critics
 - b) has effectively neutralized the judiciary as an independent branch of government
 - c) has undermined freedom of expression through a variety of measures aimed at reshaping media content and control
 - d) has sought to remake the country's labour movement in ways that violate basic principles of freedom of association
 - e) has undermined its own ability to address the country's long standing human rights problems through its aggressively adversarial approach to local rights advocates and civil society organizations;
5. Fears that under the current circumstances the local elections taking place in November 2008 could not meet all the criteria for a fair election; in this respect calls on the Chavez government to refrain from any act of intimidation against opposition candidates and permit a fair electorate climate before and during the vote in full respect of the constitutional guarantees;
6. Calls on the Chavez government to end all these practises and promote a more inclusive democracy in Venezuela in full respect of the principles enshrined in the 1999 Constitution;
7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the Governments and Parliaments of the Member States, the Parliament and the Government of the Republic of Venezuela.