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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, Adam Bielan, Ryszard Czarnecki, Konrad Szymański, Ewa Tomaszewska, Hanna Foltyn-Kubicka, Marcin Libicki, Mieczysław Edmund Janowski, Wojciech Roszkowski

on behalf of the UEN Group

on the situation of Burmese refugees in Thailand

European Parliament resolution on the situation of Burmese refugees in Thailand

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees,
 - having regard to the 1975 UN Convention against Torture,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Thailand,
 - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the indigenous Rohingya, the ethnic Muslim community in western Burma, is condemned by the ruling military regime in Burma to systematic and widespread human rights violations, including denial of citizenship rights, severe restrictions of freedom of movement and arbitrary arrests,
- B. whereas, since the early 1990s, tens of thousands of Rohingya have fled repression by the military authorities in Burma and whereas currently about 1.5 million of Rohingya live in diaspora in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries,
- C. whereas Thailand is increasingly a transit destination for Burmese refugees, fleeing repression and starvation,
- D. whereas, in the past few months, thousands of illegal immigrants from Burma have allegedly been rounded up by Thai soldiers and transferred to an island off the coast of southern Thailand, before being put into boats and set adrift at sea,
- E. whereas the Thai authorities insist that the intercepted migrants were given adequate food and water and deny that the boats' engines were sabotaged or that the boats had no engines at all,
- F. whereas several hundred Rohingya are feared to have drowned, while a number of migrants were rescued and brought to safety by Indian and Indonesian coastguards,
- G. whereas the Thai authorities insist that there were no "reasonable grounds" to believe that Rohingya were fleeing Burma for fear of being persecuted and that migrants caught in Thai waters were illegal economic migrants,
- H. whereas the UN refugee agency had sought access to 126 Rohingya in Thai military custody but the request was ignored,
1. Deplores the fact that thousands of Burmese citizens flee their country because of repression, hunger and economic decline;

2. Urges the Government of Thailand, which is a respected member of the international community and is well-known for its hospitality towards refugees, to take all necessary measures to ensure that lives of Rohingya are not at risk and they are treated in accordance with humanitarian standards and principles of protection of human rights;
3. Calls on the Thai authorities to seek, in close cooperation with the UNHCR and other humanitarian organisations, a rapid and acceptable solution for the further inflow of Burmese refugees;
4. Welcomes the commitment of Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva to conduct a full investigation of allegations of mistreatment Rohingya asylum seekers by the military;
5. Calls on the Thai Government to allow the UNHCR access to the Rohingya asylum seekers in Thai custody to determine their status and to control whether they are in need of international protection;
6. Calls on the Government of Thailand, which is a signatory of the UN Convention against torture, not to return Burmese refugees to a country where they might face torture;
7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the UN Security General, the member states of the UN, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and the government and parliament of Thailand and Burma.