



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Session document

20.10.2009

B7-0101/2009

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 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Sri Lanka

Renate Weber, Ivo Vajgl, Marielle De Sarnez, Charles Goerens
on behalf of the ALDE Group

European Parliament resolution on the situation in Sri Lanka

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Sri Lanka of 4 February 2009 and 12 March 2009,
 - having regard to the Second Additional Protocol, relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts, to the Fourth Geneva Convention ,
 - having regard to the open letter of the European Commissioner for External Relations of the 16 June 2009 on the situation in Sri Lanka,
 - having regard to the declaration of the Presidency of the European Union on 4 September 2009 on the verdict against the Sri Lankan journalist Mr. J.D. Tissainayagam,
 - having regard to Rule 122(5) of its Rules of Procedure
- A. whereas in May of this year the long-running war in Sri Lanka came to an end with the surrender of the LTTE and the death of LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran,
- B. whereas in the last months of the war intense fighting in civilian areas resulted in thousands of civilian dead and injured,
- C. whereas, five months after the cessation of hostilities, over 250,000 internally displaced persons are still forcibly confined to displacement camps,
- D. whereas the displacement camps are severely overcrowded, with inadequate access to clean water, sanitation and medical facilities,
- E. whereas heavy rains in August 2009 resulted in serious flooding and consequent damage to shelters and to sewage, sanitation and water supply; whereas further serious damage and risk to health and life is feared with the approach of the monsoon season,
- F. whereas on 26 September 2009, following a confrontation between security forces and camp detainees, soldiers opened fire on a group of internally displaced persons injuring several, including children,
- G. whereas access to the camps for humanitarian organisations and the media has been severely restricted or denied,
- H. whereas Sri Lanka is the only country in South Asia to benefit from GSP Plus status, a preferential trade agreement conditional upon compliance with core human rights and

labour standards,

- I. whereas on 31 August Sri Lankan journalist Mr. J.S. Tissainayagam was sentenced to 20 years hard labour for writing articles critical of his government's treatment of civilians during and in the aftermath of the war; whereas numerous journalists covering the conflict and the post-conflict situation in Sri Lanka have experienced violence and intimidation,
1. Deplores the conditions in the displacement camps and calls for humanitarian organisations and the media to be immediately granted access to the displacement camps,
2. Calls for all those in the camps against whom there is no credible evidence of involvement in criminal activities to be allowed leave the camps in dignity and safety; deplores the current slow pace of release,
3. Acknowledges the declared commitment of President Rajapaksa to resettle the majority of the camp detainees by the end of the year but expresses serious concern at the lack of any progress towards this goal; notes that of 10,000 people released in September 2009 over 3,000 were reported to have been transferred to other detention facilities,
4. Calls on international donors to link funding for the camps to compliance with commitments on resettlement and to implement a time-bound programme on the assistance to the camps,
5. Urges the Sri Lankan government to release lists of all those being held in the camps and to allow international organisations access to screening and DDR programmes, all of which should take place within a clear legal framework,
6. Expresses its concern for the severity of the sentence handed down to Mr. J.S. Tissainayagam and deplores the threats to and curtailment of press freedom in Sri Lanka; calls on the Sri Lankan government to uphold freedom of expression in the country,
7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President and Government of Sri Lanka.