



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Plenary sitting

5.2.2013

B7-0063/2013

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on Laos: the case of Sombath Somphone
(2013/2535(RSP))

Robert Goebbels, Marc Tarabella, Mitro Repo, Joanna Senyszyn, Liisa Jaakonsaari
on behalf of the S&D Group

**European Parliament resolution on Laos: the case of Sombath Somphone
(2013/2535(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Laos,
- having regard to the Statement by the spokesperson of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights of 21 December 2012 on Laos,
- having regard to the Statement by the spokesperson of High Representative Catherine Ashton of 21 December 2012 on the disappearance of Sombath Somphone in Laos,
- having regard to the Statement by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton of 16 January 2013 on the disappearance of Lao Civil Society Leader Sombath Somphone,
- having regard to the statements by Lao Foreign Ministry of 19 December 2012 and Laos Ambassador to the UN on 4 January 2013;
- having regard to the Joint Open Letter by 65 NGOs to Lao Prime Minister of 17 January 2013 on the disappearance of Sombath Somphone,
- having regard to the letter by Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development to the Chairperson of ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights of 4 January 2013;
- having regard to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICCPED);
- having regard to the Cooperation Agreement between the EU and the Lao People's Democratic Republic of 1 December 1997,
- having regard to Rule 122 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - A. whereas Sombath Somphone disappeared on 15 December 2012 in the capital city of Vientiane; whereas reports indicate that Sombath Somphone went missing after being stopped at a police checkpoint, on his way home and was driven away in a truck by officers in civilian clothes;
 - B. whereas Sombath Somphone founded in 1996 the Participatory Development Training Center, which trains Lao youth and local government leaders in community development and poverty reduction, and in 2005 he was awarded with the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership; whereas Sombath Somphone was the co-organizer of the Asia-Europe People-to-People Forum that took place in Vientiane in 2012 ahead of the 9th Asia-Europe Summit Meeting (ASEM),

- C. whereas in its statement of 19 December 2012 the Government confirmed the incident as recorded on the security camera; whereas the authorities claim he was a victim of a kidnapping driven by personal or business conflicts;
- D. whereas Mr Somphone has been a prominent human rights campaigner who has promoted fair land rights for small farmers;
- E. whereas the UN and 65 international human rights organisations have expressed fears that Mr Somphone may have been a victim of enforced disappearance and express grave concern over his safety and the lack of progress and information regarding investigations by the Lao authorities;
- F. whereas a group of ASEAN parliamentarians visited Laos in the week of 14 to 18 January 2013 to inquire about Sombath Somphone,
1. Expresses its deep concern over the disappearance of Mr Somphone;
 2. Calls on the Lao authorities to undertake prompt, transparent and thorough investigations into the disappearance of Sombath Somphone, in accordance with their obligations under international human right law, and to ensure the immediate and safe return of Sombath Somphone to his family;
 3. Calls on the Lao authorities to make enforced disappearance a criminal offense and to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance;
 4. Calls on the HR/VP to closely monitor the Lao government's investigations about the disappearance of Mr Somphone;
 5. Calls on the EU to put the case of Sombath Somphone among its priorities for the 22nd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council if the case has not been resolved satisfactorily before then;
 6. Welcomes the visit of a group of ASEAN parliamentarians to Laos in January to seek information about Sombath Somphone and to step up regional pressure on the government's efforts to find him;
 7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Parliament and Government of Laos, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the governments of the ASEAN Member States.