



Plenary sitting

B8-0176/2016

2.2.2016

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 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on the case of the missing book publishers in Hong Kong
(2016/2558(RSP))

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on behalf of the EFDD Group

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**European Parliament resolution on the case of the missing book publishers in Hong Kong
(2016/2558(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the EU and China as of 6 May 1975,
 - having regard to its previous resolution of 16 December 2015 on EU-China relations,
 - having regard to the Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President's Spokesperson <<on the disappearance of individuals associated with the Mighty Current publishing house in Hong Kong>> of the 7th January 2016,
 - having regard to the last EEAS statement <<EU Concerns about the Human Rights situation in China>> of the 29th January 2016,
 - having regard to the special status of Hong Kong, as a Special Administrative Region within the People's Republic of China (PRC),
 - having regard to the Hong Kong Basic Law, notably the articles regarding personal freedoms and freedom of press,
 - having regard to the recent statement of the British Foreign Secretary, who called the possible kidnapping of a British citizen as an <<egregious outrage>>,
 - having regard to the EU-China Dialogue on Human Rights, set up in 1995 and following the conclusions of the 34th meeting (30th November - 1st December 2015) where <<both sides consider human rights to be an important part of their bilateral relations>>,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. Whereas Hong Kong, as a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China is guaranteed autonomy in all matters other than foreign affairs and defence;
- B. Whereas the Basic Law of Hong Kong, and especially article 27, says that <<Hong Kong residents shall have freedom of speech, of the press and of publication; freedom of association, of assembly, of procession and of demonstration; and the right and freedom to form and join trade unions, and to strike>>;
- C. Whereas since 2014 in Hong Kong there have been many arrests for “unlawful assembly” and similar charges against students and protesters (“Umbrella

Movement”) who were demonstrating for basic freedoms as the freedoms enshrined in the Hong Kong Basic Law, especially freedom of expression;

- D. Whereas in the last months five book publishers of Hong Kong have disappeared unexpectedly and in mysterious circumstances, both in Hong Kong and outside of the PRC (in Thailand), and leave no trace;
 - E. Whereas all the book publishers who disappeared were active in some Hong Kong publishing houses which are criticizing PRC's government and its policies;
 - F. Whereas after the disappearance of the book publishers the PRC's authorities have not been able to provide enough clarity about these facts, nor have provided enough information to the European authorities;
 - G. Whereas two of the disappeared book publishers are also, respectively, a Swedish and a British citizen;
 - H. Whereas from many different sources there are rumours about a possible involvement of the Chinese security agencies or police forces in these mysterious disappearances, and that this alleged involvement has not been officially denied;
 - I. Whereas both the Swedish and the British authorities have asked full support to the Chinese authorities in order to protect the rights of their two citizens as well as the other “disappeared” individuals;
 - J. Whereas one of the missing book publishers has recently released a “public confession” on a Chinese television about a previous offence, affirming that he had “voluntarily” decided to come back to mainland China and to surrender to the Chinese authorities, even if there is no evidence of how true or genuine this confession is;
 - K. Whereas in the last days another Swedish activist, Peter Dahlin, has been released after being arrested by the Chinese Police with charges such as damaging PRC's national security;
 - L. Whereas in the last months there has been a surge of arrests related to political dissidents, human right activist or, more general, people who are criticizing the government and the Communist Party in China;
 - M. Whereas the Chinese Government acknowledges the importance of human rights, but is lacking in tangible results as regards improving its human rights record;
1. Is deeply worried and concerned by the mysterious and sudden disappearance of many book publishers of Hong Kong, and especially by the disappearance of two European citizens;
 2. Is deeply worried by the possible use of forced confession for alleged crimes, as seen during the speech of Gui Minhai on CCTV the 17th January;

3. Calls on the Council of State of the PRC, the PRC Police Authorities and the Hong Kong Government to provide immediately a clear position about this issue and all the possible information about the location of the disappeared book publishers, and, if the book publishers are in custody of any Chinese authority, to release them immediately;
4. Calls on the Chinese authorities to open immediately a fair investigation on the mysterious disappearance of the Hong Kong book publishers, especially to understand if there has been the involvement of Chinese bodies or agencies in these disappearances;
5. Is deeply worried by the worsening of the situation in China and in Hong Kong regarding freedom of speech and expression and due to the surge of arrests of human rights activists, both national and foreign citizens;
6. Calls on the Honk Kong and the Chinese authorities to open more spaces for dialogue with the civil society, NGOs and the human rights organizations regarding the basic freedoms enshrined in the Chinese Constitution and the HK Basic Law, in order to avoid any future “disappearance” of other activists;
7. Takes note of the last economic developments in China, but underlines that the extraordinary development of Chinese economy has not been coupled with other developments in the field of human rights;
8. Deplores the interference of China's security authorities in Hong Kong affairs, despite the provisions of the Hong Kong Basic Law, and deplores that Hong Kong citizens can be put under trial in a different jurisdiction such as the PRC's;
9. Deplores the tightening of security measures against civil society activists, and totally disapproves and condemns any use of kidnappings, abductions, harassments, forced confessions, arbitrary arrests and any other possible repressive measure threatened or implemented by any State authority;
10. Urges the Government of China and Hong Kong to reform the judicial and the security system in order to avoid the continuous use of political trials and arbitrary arrests;
11. Calls on the Chinese authorities to provide full support to the EEAS and the British and Swedish Authorities in order to find and free the disappeared book publishers;
12. Instructs the EEAS to monitor closely the situation of human rights in China and Hong Kong, also increasing the contacts with their diplomatic representations in Bruxelles, and to report regularly on this issue;
13. Reminds that China is an important partner for the European Union, and that a deepening of the bilateral economic or trade ties can take place only if there will be a visible and tangible evolutions of the situation about human rights in China;
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign

Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States,
to the government and parliament of China and Hong Kong.