



Plenary sitting

B8-0193/2016

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 ALDE Group

B8-0193/2016

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

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
 - having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
 - having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the additional protocols thereto,
 - having regard to the statement made on 7 January 2016 by the Spokesperson of the European Union External Action Service,
 - having regard to the April 2015 European Commission annual report on the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region,
 - having regard to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China,
 - having regard to the 2014 annual report of the Hong Kong Journalists Association titled *Press Freedom Under Siege: grave threats to freedom of expression in Hong Kong*;
- A. whereas between October and December 2015 five Hong Kong citizens (Lui Bo, Gui Minhai, Zhang Zhiping, Lin Rongji and Lee Bo) who worked for 'Causeway Bay Books', a bookstore selling tabloid style China-critical books, went missing;
- B. whereas two of the disappeared citizens hold EU passports (Swedish and British);
- C. whereas Lee Bo ran a publishing house called 'Mighty Current' that specializes in books often critical of China's politicians;
- D. whereas Gui Minhai is rumoured to have been working on a book regarding CCP general secretary Xi Jinping's personal history;
- E. whereas the employees disappeared in mysterious ways and human rights organisations reports have spoken of abduction;
- F. whereas several articles and editorials have argued that China's 'coercive power-wielding departments' could resort to covert, extraterritorial enforcement;
- G. whereas the similarities between public statements made by some of the disappeared individuals have led human rights organisations to believe the individuals have been coerced;

- H. whereas the Hong Kong Basic Law enshrines the 'one country, two systems' principle and guarantees, among other things, the freedom of speech, freedom of the press and of publication;
 - I. whereas only legal enforcement agencies in Hong Kong have the legal authority to enforce law in Hong Kong;
 - J. whereas the freedom of speech in Hong Kong is protected under Basic Law Article 27; whereas Article 22 states that no department of the central provincial or municipal government within China may interfere in the affairs which the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region administers on its own;
 - K. whereas the fear of reprisal has led some booksellers in Hong Kong to pull China-critical books off shelves;
 - L. whereas, aside from the annual pro-democracy protests that take place on the anniversary of Hong Kong's handover to China, on 10 January 2016 over 6000 people attended a protest march calling on Beijing to respect the 'one country, two systems' agreement;
 - M. whereas according to the Hong Kong Journalists Association 21st annual report (July 2014), 2014 has been the darkest year for press freedom in Hong Kong for several decades; whereas some journalists have been physically attacked or sacked while others with critical views have been moved to less sensitive areas;
1. Recalls that if, as media allege, mainland law enforcement agencies had been operating in Hong Kong, this would be a violation of the Basic Law and would be inconsistent with the 'one country, two systems' principle;
 2. Strongly supports 'One country, two systems' as a basis for good relations between the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macao and mainland China;
 3. Notes with great concern the continuing lack of information about the well-being and whereabouts of the missing employees;
 4. Urges the relevant authorities in Thailand, China and Hong Kong to clarify the circumstances of the disappearances in conformity with the rule of law;
 5. Calls on all parties involved to fully respect Hong Kong's Basic Law and its distinct cultural identity, earned over 150 years of separation from the mainland;
 6. Notes with great concern the increase in attacks on media representatives and erosion of press freedom and dignity of writers in the SAR Hong Kong since 2013;
 7. Underlines the European Union's commitment to strengthen democracy, including the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, fundamental freedoms and rights, transparency, and freedom of information and expression in Hong Kong;
 8. Notes that a peaceful and quick resolution of the occurrences can contribute to stability, serving to sustain Hong Kong's standing and competitiveness as a key international business centre;
 9. Encourages the Hong Kong authorities to enact freedom of information and archives laws to ensure that residents, including journalists, have proper access to government

information and documents;

10. Urges the competent authorities of Hong-Kong to clarify the whereabouts of the five missing book publishers, to come public on the accusations that are pending on them, and to take the appropriate procedures and measures under the rule of Law;
11. Instruct its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Hong Kong Legislative Council and the Government of the People's Republic of China.