



Plenary sitting

B8-0759/2016

7.6.2016

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 Cambodia
(2016/2753(RSP))

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on behalf of the ECR Group

B8-0759/2016

**European Parliament resolution on Cambodia
(2016/2753(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Cambodia,
- having regard to the EU local statement on the political situation in Cambodia of 30 May 2016,
- having regard to the joint press statement of 4 May 2016 of the 9th EU-Cambodia Joint Committee,
- having regard to the press statement issued on 24 November 2015 by the Office for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR),
- having regard to the 1997 Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and the Kingdom of Cambodia,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,
- having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas The Kingdom of Cambodia faces a situation of political escalation over the past weeks with clashes between government and opposition and related forces;

B. whereas on 30 May 2016 the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) pushed through a motion to allow a court investigation of Kem Sokha, acting leader of the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), who is being accused of procuring prostitutes;

C. whereas on 30 October 2015 opposition party deputy leader Kem Sokha was removed from his position as First Vice-President of the National Assembly by the CPP during a session boycotted by the CNRP; whereas granting the CNRP the post of Vice-President was one of the key concessions which the governing CPP granted the CNRP in July 2014 to end its one-year boycott of parliament after the 2013 elections;

D. whereas authorities in Phnom Penh stepped up their crackdown on anti-government "Black Monday" protests, which were launched by civil society groups after authorities arrested four officers of the human rights group ADHOC and an election official, charging them with bribery over their alleged role in the sex scandal involving Kem Sokha;

E. whereas on 30 May 2016 the opposition has delivered a petition to King Norodom Sihamoni to stop the wave of intimidation and to put an end to the political crisis;

F. whereas on 13 November 2015 the Cambodian authorities issued an arrest warrant for Sam

Rainsy, leader of the CNRP, in connection with a seven-year-old defamation case; whereas Rainsy went into self-exile in France in November 2015 and whereas according to CPP officials the return of Rainsy to Cambodia will not be allowed ahead of the next elections;

G. Whereas on 26 April 2016, the Phnom Penh court indicted Rong Chhun, a former trade union leader who is currently a member of the Cambodia National Election Committee (NEC), for trial on trumped-up politically-motivated charges of incitement of violence provoked by government security force suppression of worker strikes in late December 2013-early January 2014,

H. whereas local elections in Cambodia are foreseen in 2017 and national elections in 2018;

K. whereas the Government of Cambodia is targeting civil society, human rights defenders, parliamentarians and UN personnel;

I. Whereas according to Human Rights Watch the Cambodian government is going after the opposition in a way that hasn't been seen since the dispute over the 2013 election results;

J. whereas the right of political participation is enshrined in Article 41 of the Cambodian Constitution;

L. whereas according to Transparency International's 2015 Corruption Perceptions Index, Cambodia recorded the worst score among Southeast Asian countries;

1. Expresses its deep concerns over the recent political escalation and calls for a halt to the judicial harassment of the acting leader of the opposition, Kem Sokha, and representatives of civil society organisations, and to revoke the arrest warrant and drop all charges issued against opposition leader Sam Rainsy and to drop the charges against Rong Chhun;

2. Urges the Cambodian authorities to resume as soon as possible a peaceful and constructive dialogue with the opposition, as this is a prerequisite for the legitimacy of the forthcoming elections;

3. Reminds the Cambodian Government that it has to fulfil its obligations and commitments regarding the democratic principles and fundamental human rights which are an essential element of the Cooperation Agreement;

4. Calls on the Cambodian government to end arbitrary detentions and suspicious acts of disappearing, to release all political prisoners and to allow voluntary and human rights-defending organisations to operate freely;

5. Encourages the government to work towards strengthening democracy and the rule of law and to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, which includes fully complying with the constitutional provisions concerning pluralism and freedom of association and expression;

6. Calls on the EU Institutions and the Member States to set out clear benchmarks for the forthcoming elections in Cambodia, consistent with international law on freedom of expression, association and assembly, and to publicly communicate these benchmarks to Cambodian authorities and the opposition;

7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the European External Action Service, the Member States, the Government and National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia and the governments of the ASEAN countries.