



Plenary sitting

B8-1346/2016

13.12.2016

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 cases of the Larung Gar Tibetan Buddhist Academy and Ilham Tohti (2016/3026(RSP))

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on behalf of the ECR Group

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European Parliament resolution on the case of the Larung Gar Tibetan Buddhist Academy and Ilham Tohti (2016/3026(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Tibet;
- having regard to its report on EU-China relations of December 2015;
- having regard to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the EU and China as of 6 May 1975;
- having regard to the EU-China Strategic Partnership launched in 2003;
- having regard to the conclusions of the most recent EU-China human rights dialogue of December 2015;
- having regard to the European Union statement at the **32th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council of June 2016 in relation to the situation in China;**
- **having regard to the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, notably Section 6 on the self-government of National Autonomous Areas, and Article 36 on the freedom of religious belief;**
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948;
- having regard to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion and Belief of 1981;
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 16 December 1966,
- having regard to the White Paper on Tibet, published by the Chinese Government in April 2015;
- having regard to the Five Point Peace Plan on Tibet, published by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 1987;
- having regard to remarks by the EU presidency following the 17th EU-China Summit expressing 'concerns on freedom of expression and association in China, including the situation of the persons belonging to minorities such as Tibetans and Uighurs' and 'encouraged China to resume a meaningful dialogue with the Dalai Lama's representatives';
- having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure;

- A. whereas 2015 marked the 40th anniversary of EU-China diplomatic relations;
- B. whereas the European Union is committed to the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms all over the world, including in China, and considers China's transition to an open society based on the rule of law and the respect for human rights as central to EU-China relations;
- C. whereas China continues to face significant human rights challenges and Chinese rule over Tibet is highly controversial; whereas the Chinese authorities have been accused of the systematic destruction of Tibetan Buddhist culture and the persecution of monks loyal to His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama;
- D. whereas Ilham Tohti is a Uighur economist serving a life sentence on separatism-related charges; whereas he is known for his research on Uighur-Han relations and is an advocate for the implementation of regional autonomy laws in China; whereas Tohti was a nominee for this year's Sakharov Prize;
- E. whereas the Larung Gar Tibetan Buddhist Academy is reported to be the biggest Tibetan Buddhist institute in the world; whereas thousands of Tibetans and Han Chinese study at the Larung Gar complex, which was founded in 1980 by the late religious teacher Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok;
- F. whereas in June 2016 local Chinese authorities ordered to cut the number of Larung Gar residents by half to 5,000, citing overcrowding concerns; whereas the demolition process has seen hundreds of wooden buildings razed to the ground and around 3,000 monks and nuns expelled;
- G. whereas the Chinese authorities reportedly also pressured family members of nuns at Larung Gar and Yachen Gar, another major religious institute, to summon their relatives home or face punishment;
- H. whereas three nuns at Larung Gar committed suicide in late July or early August in protest of the mass demolitions;
- H. whereas authorities overseeing the destruction of the Larung Gar Buddhist Academy reportedly cancelled an annual eight-day Dechen Shingdrup religious festival last month, forbid public gatherings, and left the centre's remaining monks and nuns to pray privately in their rooms;
- I. whereas the Tibetan Prime Minister-in-exile Lobsang Sangay has called on the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to save the Larung Gar Buddhist Academy;
- J. whereas China sent thousands of troops to enforce its claim on Tibet in 1950 since when Tibetan culture inside and outside the Tibet Autonomous Region has been marginalised by the Chinese government, including through restrictions on freedom of expression, association, and religion;
- K. whereas a policy of Han settlement is being pursued in Tibet; whereas 2015 marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Tibet autonomous region; whereas no progress

has been made in the resolution of the Tibetan crisis in the last few years, as the last round of peace talks took place in 2010;

L. whereas Article 36 of the Chinese constitution guarantees freedom of religious belief; whereas in practice this right is frequently violated;

M. whereas the Joint Statement of the 2015 EU-China Summit recognised that human rights to be an important part of bilateral relations between the two sides;

N. whereas the EU-China human rights dialogue is a biannual process allowing the European Union to raise concerns with its Chinese counterparts via a forum under which China is committed to responding;

O. whereas the most recent EU-China human rights dialogue included specific discussions on the rights of persons belonging to minorities, including in Tibet, and on freedom of religion or belief;

P. whereas the Dalai Lama's 'Middle Way Approach' seeks neither independence nor separation for Tibet but promotes a genuine autonomy within the framework of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China;

1. Condemns the ongoing persecution and marginalisation of Tibetan and Uighur peoples and cultures by the Chinese authorities and calls on the Government in Beijing to make every effort to develop a genuine dialogue with both communities, in line with commitments in the Chinese constitution;

2. Demands that the freedoms of expression, association and religion of the Tibetan and Uighur people are fully respected;

3. Deplores the fact that the environment for practising Buddhism in Tibet has worsened significantly since the Tibetan protests of March 2008 and is deeply concerned that the Chinese government is continuing its hardline policies against the Tibetan people;

4. Expresses growing concern that China's criminal law is being abused to persecute Tibetans and Buddhists, whose religious activities are equated with 'separatism';

5. Deeply regrets reports that monks and nuns now account for approximately 44 per cent of political prisoners in Tibet; Calls, in this regard, for a full and independent investigation into the death in custody of Buddhist monk Tenzin Delek Rinpoche in 2015, as well as others who have died while being held by the Chinese authorities;

6. Deplores the demolition of buildings at the Larung Gar monastery and believes it to be another attempt by the Chinese authorities to subvert the influence of Tibetan Buddhism;

7. Deplores the continued marginalisation of Uighur culture in Xinjiang and calls on the Chinese authorities to make every effort to develop a genuine dialogue with the Uighur community, and to protect the cultural identity of the Uighur population;

8. Condemns the continued detention of Ilham Tohti and all peaceful advocates of China's

Uighur minority and demands their immediate and unconditional release; further condemns any individuals or groups who advocate violence as a means to fulfilling their objectives on behalf of the Uighur minority and recognises that they do not represent the majority in the region;

9. Reminds the Chinese Government of its commitments to religious tolerance and freedom of belief as enshrined in the Chinese Constitution;

10. Welcomes the recent visit of His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama to the European Parliament and supports his call for tolerance, fundamental rights and freedoms, and renewed dialogue over the future of Tibet;

11. Rejects as disproportionate the cancellation by the Chinese authorities of European Parliament delegations to China in response to a meeting between the Dalai Lama and MEPs on 15 September 2016;

12. Regrets the continued reluctance of the Chinese authorities to properly discuss sensitive issues relating to human rights concerns, and for their refusal to allow human rights monitoring visits in Tibet; further notes with concern the travel restrictions, notably in Tibet and Xinjiang;

13. Regrets that the EU-China human rights dialogue has not taken place in 2016, despite a commitment from both sides for it to do so biannually; notes that the last meeting of the EU-China human rights dialogue was in December 2015 despite a worsening of human rights in many areas, including in Tibet and the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region;

14. Strongly encourages the Chinese Government to respect cultural diversity and freedom of religion or belief in Tibet and the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region and believes both can make positive contributions to the richness of China's cultural diversity;

15. Calls on Chinese President Xi Jinping to fulfil the commitment he gave during a visit to Brussels in March 2014 to deepen exchanges between the EU and China on human rights issues;

16. Believes deepening EU-China relations should also be used as an opportunity to encourage the Chinese authorities to recognise that peaceful, open criticism, as well as the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, make positive contributions towards improving governance;

17. Encourages China to ratify multilateral treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopt recommendations contained in the outcome of its Universal Period Review, and to work through international fora such as the United Nations to fulfil stated reforms;

18. Calls for the Chinese government to re-enter into a dialogue with Tibetan representatives, and regrets that this process has effectively been suspended since 2010;

19. Believes the European Union's approach to human rights in China must remain one of

active engagement, recognising the delicate balance between meaningful dialogue, openness, and accountability on the one hand, with a continued focus on areas of concern, such as civil, political and religious freedoms;

20. Encourages the establishment of clear benchmarks for progress in the area of human rights, and tangible improvements in the situation on the ground as central to continuing EU-China relations;

21. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the EEAS, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the Tibetan Government in exile, and the Government of the People's Republic of China.

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