



Plenary sitting

B8-0693/2017

12.12.2017

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 Freedom of expression in Vietnam, notably the case of Nguyen Van Hoa (2017/3001(RSP))

Cristian Dan Preda, Tomáš Zdechovský, Jaromír Štětina, Claude Rolin, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Tunne Kelam, Patricija Šulin, Elisabetta Gardini, Csaba Sógor, Ivan Štefanec, Michaela Šojdrová, Laima Liucija Andrikienė, László Tőkés, Ivana Maletić, Milan Zver, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Adam Szejnfeld, Eduard Kukan, Dubravka Šuica, Ramona Nicole Mănescu, Sandra Kalniete, Lars Adaktusson, Andrey Kovatchev, Seán Kelly, Deirdre Clune, Marijana Petir, Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso, Jeroen Lenaers, Francisco José Millán Mon, Inese Vaidere
on behalf of the PPE Group

B8-0693/2017

European Parliament resolution on Freedom of expression in Vietnam, notably the case of Nguyen Van Hoa (2017/3001(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Vietnam,
 - having regard to the seventh round of the EU-Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue on 1 December 2017,
 - having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Vietnam signed on 27 June 2012,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Vietnam acceded in 1982,
 - having regard to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the EU considers Vietnam to be an important partner in Asia; whereas 2015 marks the 25th anniversary of EU-Vietnam relations; whereas these relations have broadened rapidly from trade and aid to a more comprehensive relationship;
- B. whereas Nguyen Van Hoa, a Vietnamese blogger, was sentenced on 27 November to seven years in prison for reporting on the Formosa Steel Plant toxic waste spill in 2016;
- C. whereas the People’s Court of Ha Tinh Province found Nguyen Van Hoa guilty of producing propaganda against the State under Article 88 of the Penal Code, following a two and a half hour trial; Nguyen Van Hoa was not permitted access to an attorney to represent him at the hearing;
- D. whereas on 11 January 2017, Nguyen Van Hoa was initially arrested under Article 258 of the Penal Code, and charged with “abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the state”; whereas in April 2017, these charges were upgraded to Article 88; whereas Article 88 of the Penal Code has been widely used against human rights defenders who have highlighted abuses in Vietnam;
- E. whereas the UN Human Rights Office and international human rights mechanisms have repeatedly denounced article 88 of the Penal Code, along with several other provisions of the Code, as being in breach of international human rights law;
- F. whereas ethnic minority Montagnards from the Central Highlands, many of whom are Protestant, face numerous government restrictions: some are prevented from holding religious ceremonies, many are summoned to meet with local authorities and pressured to cease practicing their faith, and pastors are harassed or punished;

- G. whereas during the seventh EU-Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue freedom of expression, association, assembly, religion and belief and access to information were discussed; whereas the EU underlined the deterioration of civil and political rights in Vietnam; whereas the EU encouraged Vietnam to issue standing invitations to UN Special procedures;
1. Condemns the sentencing of Nguyen Van Hoa to seven years in prison; underlines that Nguyen Van Hoa has exercised his right to freedom of expression; urges the Vietnamese authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Nguyen Van Hoa;
 2. Expresses its concern about the rise in the number of detentions, arrests and sentencing of Vietnamese citizens related to the expression of their opinions;
 3. Calls on the Vietnamese authorities to release all citizens detained for peacefully exercising their freedom of expression;
 4. Welcomes the strengthened partnership between the EU and Vietnam and the seventh round of the EU-Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue, which also addressed cooperation in international fora, implementation of recommendations from international bodies and international labour standards;
 5. Calls on the Vietnamese authorities to end all restrictions on, and acts of harassment against human rights defenders and to guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment;
 6. Expresses serious concerns about the extensive application of the national security provisions in Vietnam's Penal Code;
 7. Calls on the Government of Vietnam to acknowledge and address violations against religious communities, including the Montagnards;
 8. 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 Secretary-General of ASEAN and the Government and National Assembly of Vietnam.