



Plenary sitting

B9-0350/2022

4.7.2022

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 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province (2022/2753(RSP))

Emmanuel Maurel

on behalf of The Left Group

**European Parliament resolution on The situation in Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province,
(2022/2753(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966,
- having regard to the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan,
- having regard to the press release of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on Tajikistan of 20 May 2022;
- having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas on 25 November 2021 protests broke in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast region (GBAO), following the alleged torture and extra-judicial killing of Gulbiddin Ziyobekov, a young representative of the Pamiri minority; whereas the protesters demanded an investigation into the killing, the withdrawal of the military stationed in Khorog, the dismantling of military checkpoints in the city and the resignation of the Governor Alisher Mirzonabot; whereas authorities responded with violence and fired on crowd, killing two Pamiri protesters and injuring seventeen;

B. whereas tensions in GBAO resumed in May 2022, when around 1,000 people gathered to reiterate the aforementioned demands; whereas the military and special forces violently dispersed the protest, leaving at least one person dead and several injured; whereas the conflict spread to other parts of the GBAO region, including to the Rushan District; whereas military and security forces were sent into the region as part of an 'anti-terrorism operation', and reportedly used tear gas grenades and live munition against protesters, killing around forty people and injuring many others; whereas dozens of people have been detained in connection to the protests, and face criminal charges and prison terms following unfair trials;

C. whereas Tajik authorities cut Internet and mobile phone connections throughout the GBAO region for months; whereas the most recent shutdown took place on 17 May; whereas these restrictions on network access constitute a violation of freedom of expression, including freedom to seek, receive and impart information;

D. whereas independent media and civil society are being increasingly subjected to intimidation, arbitrary detention and attacks; whereas Ulfatkhonim Mamadshoeva, a prominent representative of the Pamiri minority, independent journalist and civil rights activist, was arbitrarily arrested and charged with the criminal offense of publicly calling for violent change of the constitutional order; whereas she faces up to 15 years' imprisonment; whereas the lawyer and human rights activist Manuchehr Kholiknazarov, head of the Pamir Lawyers Association

and member of the initiative Commission 44, as well as of the Civil Society Coalition against Torture and Impunity in Tajikistan, has been arrested and is accused of participating in a criminal community; whereas, if convicted and sentenced, he faces up to 12 years' imprisonment;

1. Strongly condemns the alleged extrajudicial killings and cases of torture; expresses its grave concerns at the deteriorating human rights situation in GBAO; calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all those imprisoned on political grounds, including Ulfatkhonim Mamadshoeva and Manuchehr Kholiknazarov; pending their release, calls on Tajik authorities to ensure that all persons detained in connection with the GBAO protests are protected from torture, are free to communicate with their families and have unhindered access to a lawyer of their choice;

2. Calls on the Tajik authorities to conduct, without delay, an effective and independent investigation into the violent clashes and human rights violations that took place in GBAO during the events of November 2021 and May 2022, including the alleged extrajudicial killings, injuries and torture; calls on the Tajik authorities to compensate the victims and to bring those responsible to justice;

3. Recalls the paramount importance of respecting human rights, including freedoms of assembly, association and expression, in accordance with international human rights law and the Constitution of Tajikistan; in this regard, calls on the Tajik authorities to end the persecution of peaceful protesters in GBAO, and to ensure, in law and in practice, a safe and peaceful environment for journalists, civil society organisations, lawyers and political opponents to carry out their work;

4. Stresses that GBAO is home to predominantly indigenous and minority populations, and that the gains made in the revival of traditional cultures and language over the last decade are now at risk; echoes the calls of the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, Fernand de Varennes, for an end to the repression against the Pamiri minority in GBAO and for their protection;

5. Calls on the Tajik authorities to allow immediate access to GBAO, including its Rushan District, for international humanitarian and human rights organisations to monitor the situation, document human rights violations and provide assistance to victims;

6. Calls on the authorities to engage in dialogue with protesters in order to achieve a peaceful resolution based on respect for human rights, as well as to implement conflict prevention measures;

7. Condemns the use of Internet shutdowns to violate the freedoms of expression and assembly; calls on the Tajik authorities to restore unrestricted access to the Internet and mobile phone connection, to unblock all other forms of communication, and to end all reprisals against human rights defenders and journalists who report news independently;

8. Underlines the need for a EU-Central Asia strategy not only based on geostrategic interests but also designed, implemented and monitored in line with human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals, and in cooperation with local civil society organisations, including women rights organisations and trade unions;

9. Calls on the High Representative of the European Union and the EU External Action

Service to raise these concerns with the Tajikistan authorities and, in line with The Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and Tajikistan Article 2, to take all the necessary diplomatic measure to effectively enhance human rights respect by Tajikistan's authorities;

10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the European External Action Service, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Government and Parliament of Tajikistan.