



Plenary sitting

B9-0573/2022

13.12.2022

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 **Chinese government crackdown on the peaceful protests across the People's Republic of China**
(2022/2992(RSP))

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on behalf of the ECR Group

European Parliament resolution on Chinese government crackdown on the peaceful protests across the People's Republic of China (2022/2992(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the People's Republic of China (PRC),
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966, to which the PRC is a signatory party,
 - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on 24 November 2022 a fire broke out in a high-rise apartment building in Urumqi, the capital of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region; whereas the official death toll was ten, but numerous social media posts claimed up to 40 casualties; whereas the building was allegedly sealed off due to lockdown measures, causing residents to be trapped inside the building and to be unable to escape; whereas due to pandemic-related barricades in nearby streets, fire engines reportedly took a long time to arrive at the scene in the city where a seamless lockdown had been underway for over 100 days;
- B. whereas most victims appear to be from the Uyghur Muslim minority, which has faced a campaign of intense state violence in Xinjiang since 2017;
- C. whereas the fire prompted mass anti-lockdown protests, not only in Xinjiang, but also in Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Wuhan, Chengdu and other Chinese cities; whereas in several cities the anti-lockdown protests have turned into general protests calling for or universal values, such as personal liberty, freedom of expression and the rule of law and an end to government propaganda, quickly adopting a blank sheet of paper as a symbol; whereas many consider it the largest mass protests since the student movement of 1989;
- D. whereas the police forces after initial restraint quickly pivoted to breaking up crowds and carrying out widespread arrests in several cities; whereas police clamped down on dissenting voices, announcing the arrest of a 24-year-old woman for spreading “untrue information” about the death toll online; whereas in Shanghai, police used pepper spray to stop around 300 protesters who had gathered; whereas posts about the protest were deleted immediately on China's social media in an effort to suppress criticism; whereas a wave of targeted arrests is likely to follow as police use China's surveillance net to

identify individual protesters; whereas Chinese state media has so far simply avoided covering the protests.

- E. whereas China's zero-COVID policy has come under increasing pressure from inside as it has seriously impacted the socio-economic situation and intensified the feeling of Chinese people of being cut off from the world;
- F. whereas China's health care system has a critical shortage of hospital beds, its vaccines underperform, and vaccination rates among people 60 and older are inadequate;
- G. whereas on 11 November, the State Council announced a "20-point liberalization" package, limiting the extent and intensity of lockdowns, particularly in non-infected districts in urban areas. whereas this dispensation was largely ignored by local officials who feared losing their jobs for being found insufficiently zealous in enforcing stringent zero-Covid measures; whereas on 7 December China announced a nationwide loosening of Covid-19 restrictions;
- H. whereas during his recent visit to China, President of the European Council Charles Michel welcomed the readiness to resume the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue, that has not taken place for more than three years;

1. Expresses its condolences and stands in solidarity with the victims of the Urumqi fire and their family members; calls upon the Chinese government to provide transparency about the number of victims and the circumstances under which they passed away; calls for a prompt, effective and thorough investigation of the Urumqi fire;
2. Condemns the persecution of persons involved in peaceful protests, and calls to ensure that anyone subject to violations of their rights can seek effective remedy; deplores the surveilling, harassing, mistreating, searching and arbitrarily arresting of journalists and press freedom defenders for independently reporting on the protests;
3. Requests the Chinese authorities to publish the number of persons detained for taking part in peaceful protests, provide details of their alleged crimes and ensure that their family members are notified of their whereabouts and the charges made against them;
4. Calls on the Chinese authorities to ensure the physical and psychological safety and well-being of all those currently deprived of liberty on grounds related to the recent protests, and guarantee their rights, including to meet with their family and with a lawyer of their own choice;

5. Urges the Chinese authorities to stop interfering with, harassing and intimidating lawyers and legal professionals, human rights defenders, and others who openly express concern about the protesters or who defend the right to peaceful protest;
6. Urges the Chinese government to respect peoples' basic rights to privacy, freedom of expression, press, association and peaceful assembly without fear of retaliation, as enshrined in its Constitution and international human rights law;
7. Calls on the EU and other international organizations to monitor and assess how China's responses to these protests align with international human rights standards and its obligations under international human rights law; stresses the importance of the EU Delegation in Beijing continuing to monitor the detention of peaceful protesters and any trials of those prosecuted for exercising their right to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression;
8. Calls on the European Union and its member states to raise their human rights concerns with the Chinese authorities up to the highest political level; encourages a swift resumption of the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue;
9. Asks the EU and its member states to continue to work with like-minded partners towards the establishment of an investigative mechanism at the UN Human Rights Council to monitor, assess and publicly report on serious human rights violations across China;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Government and Parliament of the People's Republic of China, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Commission, the Council and the governments and parliaments of the Member States;