



Plenary sitting

B9-0186/2023

14.3.2023

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 Cambodia: the case of opposition leader Kem Sokha
(2023/2589(RSP))

Pedro Marques Karsten Lucke Marianne Vind
on behalf of the S&D Group

European Parliament resolution on Cambodia: the case of opposition leader Kem Sokha (2023/2589(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Cambodia,
- having regard to the statement of 3 March 2023 by the High Representative Josep Borrell on the verdict delivered on Kem Sokha;
- having regard to the statement of 3 March 2023 by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk;
- A. Whereas on 3 March 2023, the Phnom Penh municipal court found Kem Sokha, former president of the dissolved Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), guilty of treason and sentenced him to 27-year in prison, indefinitely suspending his political and electoral rights;
- B. Whereas the politically motivated charges against Kem Sokha are designed to eliminate one of the main opposition leaders; whereas Mr Sokha has been subject to arbitrary detention, mistreatment in custody, and banned from any political activity since his arrest in 2017;
- C. Whereas Mr Sokha's conviction follows a series of non-democratic measures by the Cambodian Government: closing of Voice of Democracy and other independent media, harassment of opposition members, including exiled leader Sam Rainsy; trade unionists and environmentalists; whereas in November 2020 the Cambodian Government started mass trials against 138 opposition members, with at least 50 reported to still be in custody
- D. Whereas prior to the 2018 elections, the Cambodian Government-controlled Supreme Court dissolved the CNRP and placed a five-year ban to preclude 118 CNRP members from participating in any political activity, assuring that the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) would win all 125 seats in the national parliament and make Cambodia a one-party state;
- E. Whereas general elections will be held in Cambodia in July 2023 and the National Election Committee (NEC) is controlled by the ruling party;
- F. Whereas in February 2020 the EU partially withdrew tariff preferences granted to Cambodia under the "Everything But Arms" scheme due to serious and systematic human rights violations;
- 1. Strongly deplores the politically motivated conviction of Kem Sokha and the violation of his political rights;
- 2. Urges the Cambodian Government to immediately release Kem Sokha and all the political prisoners still detained, to reinstate their political rights and the CNRP in time

to participate in the elections;

3. Calls on the Cambodian Government to stop restricting civil liberties, freedom of association and media freedom, to ensure just, transparent and credible elections, to transform the NEC into an independent agency and to grant access to international election observers;
4. Calls on the EU and the international community to take immediate and effective action, including targeted sanctions against those responsible for the political repression, to put pressure on the Cambodian Government until its obligations under the UN treaties are met;
5. Calls on the EU members and EEAS to provide protection for Cambodian human rights defenders, civil society representatives and opposition members persecuted for their political activity;
6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission, the Secretary-General of ASEAN and the Prime Minister, the Government and the National Assembly of Cambodia.