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Session document

10 April 2002

B5-0208/2002 }
B5-0214/2002 }
B5-0222/2002 }
B5-0235/2002 }

RC1

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 50(5) of the Rules of Procedure by

- Hartmut Nassauer and Bernd Posselt, on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
- Richard Corbett and Margrietus J. van den Berg, on behalf of the PSE Group
- Jules Maaten, on behalf of the ELDR Group
- Patricia McKenna, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
- Jonas Sjöstedt, on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group
- Bastiaan Belder, on behalf of the EDD Group

replacing the motions by the following groups:

- ELDR and EDD (B5-0208/2002),
- PPE-DE (B5-0214/2002),
- Verts/ALE (B5-0222/2002),
- PSE (B5-0235/2002),

on indigenous minorities in Vietnam and closure of the refugee camps in Cambodia

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PE 317.154}
PE 317.160}
PE 317.168}
PE 317.181} RC1

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European Parliament resolution on indigenous minorities in Vietnam and closure of the refugee camps in Cambodia

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Vietnam of 19 January 1995, 15 May 1997, 16 March 1998, 16 November 2000 and 5 July 2001,
 - having regard to the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees of 1951 and its 1967 Protocol,
 - having regard to the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,
 - having regard to the 1995 Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and Vietnam,
 - having regard to the Tripartite Agreement signed on 21 January 2002 between Cambodia, Vietnam and the UNHCR,
- A. whereas Cambodia is a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, which prohibits forcible repatriation of asylum seekers to a country where their life or freedom may be threatened,
- B. whereas Vietnam and Cambodia as parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) are obliged to uphold the freedoms of speech, association, religious belief and worship,
- C. concerned by the continued persecution of indigenous minorities from Vietnam's Central Highlands - known as Montagnards - since the demonstrations that took place in February 2001 in protest against the confiscation of their ancestral land, the influx of lowland Vietnamese settlers taking their agricultural land, the lack of freedom of worship for the members of the unauthorised evangelical protestant churches and the denial of basic rights and freedoms, including education in basic languages,
- D. whereas the 'Moïs' had a specific linguistic and ethnic identity which they wish to see respected in a context of autonomy,
- E. whereas the Cambodian authorities have always been reluctant to grant them political asylum and now wish to close the refugee camps and authorise their occupants to seek asylum in third countries, particularly the United States,
- F. having regard to the demographically driven movement of Vietnam's population in the direction of Vietnam's Central Highlands and Cambodia, despite the fact that the resources available to Cambodia make it ill-equipped to deal with this influx,
- G. whereas the Tripartite Agreement between the UNHCR, Cambodia and Vietnam provided for repatriation under the auspices of the UNHCR of the approximately 1,000 Montagnards

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who fled to Cambodia as a consequence of violations of their human rights and are currently sheltered at the two UNHCR sites in Mondolkiri and Ratanakirimore,

- H. deeply concerned by the decision of the Cambodian and Vietnamese Governments to attempt to implement the repatriation agreement bilaterally before this year's rainy season, as well as the refusal by the Vietnamese Government to permit UNHCR monitoring teams to visit the villages of potential returnees,
- I. whereas the consequent withdrawal of UNHCR from the Tripartite Agreement and the termination of its involvement with the repatriation process leave the asylum seekers exposed to the risk of undue influence, intimidation and coercion to return to Vietnam,
- J. whereas in the past year more than 200 refugees have been forcibly returned to Vietnam by the Cambodian provincial authorities, with some of them being detained and beaten by the Vietnamese authorities on their return,
- K. whereas respect for human rights and democratic principles is an essential element in the 1995 EC-Vietnam cooperation agreement, as well as in the 1999 EC-Cambodia cooperation agreement,
 - 1. Calls on all parties (Cambodia, Vietnam and the UNHCR) to seek a lasting solution to the plight of the Montagnard asylum seekers;
 - 2. Urges the Cambodian Government to uphold its obligations as a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, in particular by ensuring that any repatriation of Montagnards to Vietnam is conducted on a voluntary basis, and by guaranteeing that asylum seekers arriving in Cambodia are not denied their basic right of asylum;
 - 3. Calls for the suspension of the repatriation programmes until firm guarantees are given by both governments that the returns are completely voluntary and the lives of the Montagnards concerned will not be threatened once they are back in Vietnam;
 - 4. Calls on the Government of Vietnam to end the arbitrary detention of highlanders who have returned from Cambodia to Vietnam either voluntarily or against their will;
 - 5. Calls on the Commission to help the Vietnamese authorities to develop their country in such a way as to put an end to the economic exodus of its population;
 - 6. Calls on the Commission to assist the Government of Vietnam in its programme to reduce poverty and improve living conditions in the Central Highlands region;
 - 7. Calls on the Government of Vietnam to allow UNHCR staff access to Vietnam's Central Highlands to monitor the situation of returning asylum-seekers, and on the parties to the Tripartite Agreement to resume their cooperation, in particular by allowing UNHCR to station monitors in the region with a view to conducting visits before, during and after any repatriation;
 - 8. Calls on the Vietnamese Government to release unconditionally all persons in the Central

Highlands who are being detained for peacefully expressing their political or religious beliefs, including protestant church activists and supporters of the highland independent movement;

9. Calls for Vietnamese nationals not to be repatriated against their will; calls on the Commission to assist the Government of Cambodia with receiving people coming from Vietnam;
10. Calls on the EU Member States to offer shelter to some of the Vietnamese refugees;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia, ASEAN and the UN.