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B7-0049/2014

## 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 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation of rights defenders and opposition activists in Cambodia and Laos  
(2014/2515(RSP))

**Cristian Dan Preda, Bernd Posselt, Filip Kaczmarek, Tunne Kelam, Elena Băsescu, Monica Luisa Macovei, Philippe Boulland, Eduard Kukan, Roberta Angelilli, Petri Sarvamaa, Eija-Riitta Korhola, Giovanni La Via, Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris, Sari Essayah, Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa, Seán Kelly, Anne Delvaux, Krzysztof Lisek, Csaba Sógor, Joachim Zeller, Davor Ivo Stier, Bogusław Sonik**  
on behalf of the PPE Group

**B7-0049/2014**

**European Parliament resolution on the situation of rights defenders and opposition activists in Cambodia and Laos (2014/2515(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Cambodia and Laos,
- having regard to the Local EU Statements on violence surrounding labour disputes of 4 January 2014 and on new legislature in Cambodia of 23 September 2013,
- having regard to the Statement by the Spokesperson of High Representative Catherine Ashton/Vice-President of the Commission following the elections in Cambodia of 29 July 2013,
- having regard to the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia of 5 August 2013,
- having regard to the Cooperation Agreement of 1997 between the European Community and the Kingdom of Cambodia,
- having regard to the Statement by the spokesperson of High Representative Catherine Ashton/Vice-President of the Commission on the disappearance of Sombath Somphone in Laos of 21 December 2012,
- having regard to the European Development Partners' Statement at Lao PDR's Round Table Meeting of 19 November 2013,
- having regard to the Cooperation Agreement between the EU and the Lao People's Democratic Republic of 1 December 1997,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders of 2008,
- having regard to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and to the UN Declaration of 18 December 1992 on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,
- having regard to Rule 122 of its Rules of Procedure,

**Cambodia**

- A. whereas in the past weeks people in Cambodia have been protesting over wages for garment workers and the political situation; whereas at present demonstrations are not allowed;

- B. whereas on 3 January at a protest by workers that turned violent security forces have opened fire with live ammunition on demonstrators killing five people and injuring more than 30 people; whereas on 4 January security forces have forcefully cleared Freedom Park, where opposition activists were gathered together;
- C. whereas 23 people, including rights defenders, have been arrested during the recent events and there is no information about their whereabouts;
- D. whereas Cambodia National Rescue Party leaders Sam Rainsy and Kem Sokha have been summoned to appear at the Phnom Penh Municipal Court on 14 January for questioning; whereas Sam Rainsy and kem Sokha may be convicted of incitement to civil unrest;
- E. whereas the High Representative/ Vice-President of the Commission congratulated the people of Cambodia on the peaceful and calm conduct of the elections on 28 July 2013, but regretted that the authorities did not take all necessary actions to address some of the key shortcomings such as improving the reliability of the voter list, ensuring equitable access to media and preventing the use of State resources including campaigning by civil servants and the military;
- F. whereas the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia will carry out an official visit to the country from 12 to 17 January 2014;

## **Laos**

- G. whereas Sombath Somphone, a prominent figure in social development and youth education, disappeared on 15 December 2012 in the capital of Laos, Vientiane; whereas Sombath Somphone's family have been unable to locate him since that day, despite repeated appeals to the local authorities and searches in the surrounding area;
- H. whereas during the visit of the Delegation for relations with the countries of South East Asia and the Association of South East Nations (ASEAN) to Laos on 28 October 2013 the disappearance of Sombath Somphone was raised with the Lao authorities;
- I. whereas the High Representative/Vice-President of the Commission replied on behalf of the Commission on 11 September 2013 to a parliamentary question that the Lao authorities have not communicated thoroughly on the investigation, and have declined assistance from abroad for the investigation into the disappearance, while basic questions deriving from the CCTV footage of the abduction remain unanswered;
- J. whereas European partners of Laos regard the unexplained disappearance of Sombath Somphone as a very serious matter and regard the statements made by the Government on this case as neither sufficient nor convincing;
- K. whereas on 15 December 2013 62 NGOs have called for a new investigation into his disappearance; whereas on 16 December 2013 the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances urged the Government of Laos to do its utmost to locate Mr. Somphone, to establish his fate and whereabouts, and to hold the perpetrators accountable;

## **Cambodia**

1. Condemns the disproportionate and excessive use of force by security forces in Cambodia, which resulted in the loss of lives and left people wounded; extends its condolences to the families of the victims;
2. Calls on the Cambodian authorities to disclose information about the whereabouts of the 23 people arrested and grant family members, lawyers and independent medical professionals immediate access to them; calls for a swift and independent investigation into the recent violence and stresses that all those responsible for the killings and injuries should be identified and held accountable for their actions; expresses its concern that some demonstrators were increasingly resorting to violence;
3. Is concerned about the situation of rights defenders and opposition activists in Cambodia; condemns all politically motivated sentences and convictions against political critics, opposition politicians, human rights defenders and land activists in Cambodia; stresses that human rights defenders and especially those defending land rights should be allowed to carry on with their work without intimidation and harassment;
4. Calls on the Cambodian Government to strengthen democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression and assembly;
5. Calls on all parties involved in labour disputes in Cambodia to use all possible peaceful means to find a solution to their differences;
6. Notes with concern the on-going dispute over alleged irregularities in the electoral process; calls on the political parties to work together to identify any flaws that occurred and to agree on steps to improve the electoral process, notably reform of the voter list, the media environment, and the National Election Committee, as well as on structural reforms in areas that will contribute to Cambodia's longer term development, including judicial reform, National Assembly reform and other efforts to boost good governance and democracy;
7. Welcomes the visit of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia from 12 to 17 January 2014;
8. Calls on the High Representative/Vice-President of the Commission to closely monitor the situation in Cambodia;

## **Laos**

9. Expresses its deep concern regarding the disappearance, safety and wellbeing of Sombath Somphone;
10. Calls on the Lao authorities to undertake prompt, transparent and thorough investigations, in accordance with their obligations under international human rights

law, to fully cooperate with UN bodies such as the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and to ensure the immediate and safe return of Sombath Somphone to his family;

11. Reiterates its call on the High Representative/ Vice-President of the Commission to closely monitor the Lao Government's investigations into the disappearance of Sombath Somphone;
12. Stresses that the Lao authorities should take all necessary steps to end the practice of arbitrary arrests and secret detention; calls on Laos to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance;
13. Calls on the Government of Laos to respect the rights of free expression and association and the rights of minorities, and to protect the right to freedom of religion or belief;
14. 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 EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the EU Member States, the ASEAN secretariat, the UN Secretary-General, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Government and National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Government and Parliament of Laos.