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**HUMAN RIGHTS: OPPOSITION IN CAMBODIA, PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE IN TAJIKISTAN,  
CONTINUING VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN VIETNAM**

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Parliament deplores the worsening climate for opposition politicians and human rights activists in Cambodia, calls on Tajikistan to allow opposition groups, lawyers and journalists to operate freely, and urges Vietnam to put an immediate end to all harassment, intimidation, and persecution of political activists, journalists, bloggers, dissidents and human rights defenders, in three resolutions voted on Thursday.

#### Opposition in Cambodia

MEPs deplore the worsening climate for opposition politicians and human rights activists in Cambodia and condemn all acts of violence, politically-motivated charges, arbitrary detention, questioning, sentences and convictions imposed on them.

The Cambodian authorities should revoke the arrest warrant for, and drop all charges against, Sam Rainsy, President of the leading opposition party, the CNRP, and also immediately release the five human rights defenders still in preventive custody, namely Ny Sokha, Nay Vanda, Yi Soksan, Lim Mony and Ny Chakra, urge MEPs. All politicians, activists and human rights defenders should "be allowed to work freely without fear of arrest or persecution", they add.

Given that the EU is Cambodia's largest development assistance partner, with a new allocation of [ ] million for 2014-2020, Parliament calls on the European External Action Service (EEAS) to make the "amount of EU financial assistance dependent on improvements in the human rights situation in the country". EU member states, foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, the EEAS and the EU Commission should also set out clear benchmarks for the forthcoming elections in Cambodia, consistent with international law on freedom of expression, association and assembly, it adds.

## Prisoners of conscience in Tajikistan

Parliament is deeply concerned about increases in the detention and arrest of human rights lawyers, political opposition members and their relatives in Tajikistan. Restrictions on media freedom and internet and mobile communications, and restrictions on religious expression are also worrying in this country, it adds.

MEPs call for the release of all those imprisoned on politically-motivated charges, including, well-known businessman and government critic Abubakr Azizkhodzhaev, opposition figure Zaid Saidov, activist Maksud Ibragimov, opposition deputy leaders Mahmadali Hayit and Saidumar Hussaini, and 11 other members of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT).

The EU has a "vital interest in stepping up political, economic and security cooperation with the Central Asian region via a strong and open EU-Tajikistan relationship", says the resolution. But "political and economic relations with the EU are deeply linked to the sharing of values relating to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms", adds the text.

## Protesters in Vietnam

MEPs deplore continuing human rights violations in Vietnam, including "political intimidation, harassment, assaults, arbitrary arrests, heavy prison sentences and unfair trials, perpetrated against political activists, journalists, bloggers, dissidents and human rights defenders", and call on the government of Vietnam to put an "immediate stop to all harassment, intimidation, and persecution" of these individuals.

"The increasing levels of violence perpetrated against Vietnamese protesters" demonstrating throughout the country in May 2016 to express their anger over "an ecological catastrophe that decimated the nation's fish stocks" are worrying, note MEPs. The Vietnam government should respect the right to freedom of assembly in line with its international human rights obligations, the findings of the investigations into the environmental disaster should be published and those responsible should be held accountable, they add.

The resolution also calls on the Vietnam government to put an end to religious persecution in the country, to amend legislation on the status of religious minorities and to withdraw the fifth draft of the law on belief and religion, currently being debated in the National Assembly, as it is "incompatible with international norms of freedom religion or belief".

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Kaynak/Source: