Resolution on Burma

2008/2658(RSP) - 23/10/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate that took place on the same date, the European Parliament adopted by 68 votes to 0 and no abstentions, a resolution on Burma. The resolution had been tabled for consideration in plenary by the EPP-ED, PES, ALDE, UEN, Greens/ALE and GUE/NGL groups.

Parliament recalls that 24 October 2008 marks the 13th anniversary of the unjust incarceration as a political prisoner of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, General Secretary of the National League for Democracy (NLD). The Seventh Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) will take place in China on 24 and 25 October 2008.

Members **condemn the continued detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi**, who has been under intermittent house arrest since her victory at the last democratic elections in 1990, and insists upon her immediate release. They deplore the fact that the number of **political prisoners has increased** from 1 300 to 2 000 in the aftermath of the Saffron Revolution in September 2007, and that, despite the release of veteran journalist and NLD secretary U Win Tin and six other leaders in September 2008, 23 NLD members were subsequently arrested.

Parliament denounces the arbitrary charges behind the arrests of many dissidents and the harsh conditions of detention of political prisoners including widespread use of torture and hard labour. It expresses deep concern about the systematic denial of medical treatment to political prisoners, and calls for the International Committee of the Red Cross to be allowed to resume visits.

The ASEM states at their Summit are urged to appeal jointly to the Burmese military authorities to release all political prisoners.

The resolution strongly condemns the **ethnic cleansing directed against the Karen minority**, including those seeking refuge in neighbouring Thailand. The international community must exert stronger pressure on the junta to stop military actions against civilians and to increase humanitarian assistance to affected populations, including by cross-border mechanisms, where necessary. The Burmese authorities are asked urgently to attend to their humanitarian responsibilities, in particular with respect to the **impending famine in Chin state**.

Parliament goes on to note that 37 visits by **UN envoys** in the past 20 years have not secured a single reform by the Burmese State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). It draws attention to the UN Security Council Presidential Statement on the situation in Myanmar (S/PRST/2007/37), which has also been ignored by the SPDC. Timelines and benchmarks must be set for reform, and for the UN Security Council must resolve to take further action on Burma if the timelines and benchmarks are not met. However, Parliament calls on the Secretary-General of the United Nations to press ahead with a second visit to Burma in December 2008, irrespective of prevailing conditions, in order to make an urgent personal appeal for the release of all political prisoners and the full inclusion of the NLD in preparations for the 2010 elections, and to emphasise that UN demands must be met.

Members point out that the UN revealed in August 2008 that the Burmese military authorities were fraudulently **seizing a percentage of humanitarian aid remitted to Burma** through falsely weighted currency exchange rates. They call on the Commission to explain what action it intends to take with respect to the UN admission. The Commission must insist on the lifting of all restrictions on aid delivery imposed by the Burmese military authorities on areas afflicted by Cyclone Nargis, and present a full report on the efficacy of its assistance and the extent of assistance still required.

Parliament calls on the European Council to use its meeting on 11-12 December 2008 to review Council Regulation (EC) No 194/2008 on restrictive measures in respect of Burma/Myanmar, to **broaden targeted sanctions** to include access to international banking services for companies, conglomerates and businesses owned by or closely linked to the Burmese military, to halt all imports of Burmese manufactured clothing, and to terminate access by selected generals and their families to business opportunities, health care, consumer purchases, and foreign education.

Lastly, the Governments of **China, India and Russia** are urged to use their considerable economic and political leverage with the Burmese authorities in order to bring about substantial improvements in the country and to cease the supply of weaponry and other strategic resources.