

Resolution on the Philippines

2009/2555(RSP) - 12/03/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 10 March 2009, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the Philippines. The resolution had been tabled by the EPP-ED, PES, GUE/NGL, ALDE, UEN and Greens/ALE groups.

Parliament recalls that hostilities between government forces and the Moro National Liberation Front (MILF) in Mindanao resumed in August 2008 after the Supreme Court of the Philippines declared unconstitutional the Memorandum of Agreement between the MILF and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) on the Ancestral Domain, which would have given substantial autonomy to the Bangsamoro nation. The renewed fighting has killed over one hundred and displaced approximately 300 000 people, many of whom are still in evacuation centres.

Parliament expresses its grave concern about the hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people in Mindanao, and calls on the GRP and the MILF to do all in their power to bring about a situation which allows people to return home, and calls for enhanced national and international action to protect and to work towards the rehabilitation of the displaced persons. It believes strongly that the conflict can only be resolved through dialogue, and that the resolution of this long-standing insurgency is essential for the sake of the overall development of the Philippines.

Members call on the GRP to resume peace negotiations with the MILF and to clarify the status and future of the Memorandum of Agreement after the Supreme Court ruling. They welcome the GRP's announcement that it intends to drop preconditions for the resumption of talks. They also welcome the talks, facilitated by Norway, between the GRP and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) in Oslo in November 2008 and hopes, in this case also, that formal negotiations can rapidly resume. The Council and the Commission are asked to provide support to the parties in implementing the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL), notably through development, relief and rehabilitation programmes.

The Council and commission are asked to do the following:

- support the GRP in its efforts to advance the peace negotiations, including by means of facilitation if requested, as well as through support for the International Monitoring Team responsible for overseeing the ceasefire between the military and the MILF. The role of the International Monitoring Team could be enhanced through a stronger mandate for investigations and through an agreed policy of making its findings public;
- ensure that the EU's financial assistance towards economic development in the Philippines is accompanied by scrutiny of possible violations of economic, social and cultural rights, with special attention being paid to encouraging dialogue and inclusion of all groups in society.

Members express grave concern at the hundreds of cases of extrajudicial killings of political activists and journalists that have occurred in recent years in the Philippines, and the role that the security forces have played in orchestrating and perpetrating those murders.

Parliament calls upon the GRP to do the following:

- increase development aid to Mindanao in order to improve the desperate living conditions of the local population. Members welcome the financial support of more than EUR 13 million in aid which the EU has given to Mindanao since fighting restarted in August 2008;
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investigate cases of extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances; calls at the same time on the GRP to put into place an independent monitoring mechanism to oversee the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of such acts;

- adopt measures to end the systematic intimidation of political activists, members of civil society, journalists and witnesses in criminal prosecutions, and to ensure truly effective witness protection.