Resolution on the Philippines

2010/2514(RSP) - 21/01/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 569 votes to 10 with 17 abstentions a resolution on the Philippines.

The resolution had been tabled by the EPP, ECR ALDE, S&D, Greens/ALE GUE/NGL and EFD groups.

Parliament **strongly condemns the Maguindanao massacre of 23 November 2009** and expresses its solidarity with the families of the deceased. It recalls that on that date, 100 armed men from a local militia led by the Ampatuan family, tortured and brutally murdered 57 members of a convoy, including female relatives of Esmail Mangudadatu, some of whom were raped, lawyers and 30 journalists, who were on their way to file Mangudadatu's candidacy for the governorship of Maguindanao province in Mindanao. Parliament welcomes the response of the Philippines Government to the massacre, whilst deploring the initial delays, and stresses that the police investigation must be comprehensive and independent and that it must be followed by effective prosecutions, including of the members of the security forces suspected of involvement. However, Parliament is deeply concerned that the personal links which members of the administration maintain with the Ampatuan family could hinder rather than help an impartial investigation into the killings and calls for the Ampatuan family to be questioned by the National Bureau of Investigation.

Members welcome the signing in October 2009 of the **Financing Agreement for the EU-Philippines Justice Support Programme** (EPJUST), which allocates EUR 3.9m in support, assistance and training to strengthen the criminal justice system and support the work of the Commission on Human Rights and of civil society group. It looks forward to the reports on the work of the monitoring system, to be established under EPJUST, which will be responsible for tracking the nation's progress in combating extrajudicial killings and related abuses.

Parliament calls on the Philippines Government to do the following:

take decisive steps in order to end extrajudicial killings and disappearances, and to shed light on all other unresolved cases, including that of Jonas Burgos, who was disappeared in April 2007;

- to ratify the UN Convention on Forced Disappearances;
- to take decisive action in order immediately to stop all private and local funding of police and military auxiliary groups and to disband paramilitary forces and local militias;
- to step up efforts to eliminate instances of political violence in order to safeguard the future of democracy in the Philippines;
- to establish a high-level task force with broad political support in order urgently to implement measures to prevent election-related violence in the months ahead of the May 2010 elections and to take steps designed to protect the media and freedom of expression in general.

Noting that on 24 November 2009 the Philippines Government declared a **state of emergency** in the two provinces concerned, thus putting the military in charge of law and order, Parliament expresses its concern that the declaration of a state of emergency by the President, combined with the conferral of greater powers on the armed forces, which in the past have been implicated in numerous extrajudicial killings, will not prevent or curb election-related violence in Mindanao province.

Lastly, Members welcome the decision by the Supreme Court to allow the participation of Ang Ladlad in the May elections a decision which overturns the initial refusal on 'moral grounds' by the Commission on Elections.