Resolution on the cases of impunity in the Philippines

2012/2681(RSP) - 14/06/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 49 votes to 0 with 3 abstentions, a resolution on the cases of impunity in the Philippines.

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

Parliament **strongly condemns the murder of Esmail Amil Enog, the third witness of the Maguindanao massacre** where 57 victims were killed in 2009, and it condemns also the assassination of four journalists in 2012, and expresses its solidarity with the families of the deceased.

Members state that Mr Enog's brutal death is a clear indicator of the fact that **the climate of impunity that fostered the Maguindanao massacre is still alive in the country.** Whilst extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances have significantly declined since President Aquino assumed power, the government's ability to effectively combat the widespread impunity of the perpetrators of such acts and tackle the politically motivated violence in the country remains insufficient. The resolution notes that, according to human right organisations, of the many hundreds of cases of extrajudicial killings in the last decade, only seven, involving 11 defendants, have been successfully prosecuted, and none since President Aquino took power.

Under these circumstances, Parliament expresses its serious concern over **judicial independence and slow convictions for human rights violations** in the country, and calls for an **immediate independent investigation into the recent murder cases**. It call on the Philippines Government to take further measures in order to **end impunity** for extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and torture and bring those responsible to justice, including the perpetrators of the Maguindanao massacre who are still at large.

Members call on the Philippines government to:

- ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and to enact the Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance Act;

- ensure the adequate protection of human rights defenders, trade unionists and journalists, effectively investigate and prosecute attacks against journalists, and introduce into domestic law strong legislation prohibiting such acts and imposing criminal penalties;

- establish, under the Commission on Human Rights, a specialised programme for witness and victim protection, including the protection of the families of victims, in cases involving serious human rights violations, particularly when the perpetrators are believed to be soldiers, police or state officials;

- increase efforts to rigorously combat violations of the national Anti-Terror Act of 2009;

- immediately prohibit and disband paramilitary forces (including where paramilitary activity is supervised by military command) and local militias, and to establish full military and police control over the armed civilian units, notably the Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Units and Civilian Volunteer Organisations;

- to take concrete steps to implement the recommendations made to the Philippines during the recent UPR and to revoke, without further delay, Executive Order 546, in order to ban private armies. Parliament notes that according to the May 2011 report of the Independent Commission Against Private Armies there are at least 72 active private armed groups in the country;

- enable a visit by the UN Special Rapporteur to investigate the human rights situation in the country.

Members welcome the successful implementation of the EPJUST programme and the new EU-Philippines justice support programme 'Justice for All', which will be launched soon and will allocate EUR 10 million over the period 2012-2015 in order to promote equitable access to justice and its efficient enforcement for all citizens in general, and in particular for poor and disadvantaged people, especially women, children, minorities and indigenous peoples, as well as human rights and social activists.