Resolution on the situation in Cambodia

2012/2844(RSP) - 26/10/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in Cambodia.

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

It condemns all politically motivated sentences and convictions against political critics, parliamentary opposition politicians, notably Sam Rainsy (the leader of the Sam Rainsy Party, who has been convicted on charges that are allegedly politically motivated), human rights defenders and land activists, and deplores the deaths of Chut Wutty and Heng Chantha, both killed while exercising their right to peaceful protest. It calls for an immediate and unconditional release of Mom Sonando, a human rights defenders accused of anti-state crime and other government critics and land rights activists who are being held for political reasons only, and stresses that all those responsible for human rights violations should be identified and held accountable for their actions.

Members underline the importance of the UN Special Rapporteur's conclusion that the serious and widespread human rights violations associated with land concessions need to be addressed and remedied. They recall that as of August 2012 the Cambodian Government has granted at least 2 157 744 hectares of economic land concessions to over 200 companies, often in violation of the provisions of the 2001 Land Law and bypassing legal safeguards such as the obligations to prevent concessions in protected areas, undertake social impact assessment and obtain the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous communities. They also recall that the Prime Minister, Hun Sen, issued in May 2012 a directive establishing a moratorium on new economic land concessions and stipulating a review of the existing concessions. However, despite the directive at least 12 new concessions were granted, since a loophole in the directive allows conclusion of new land concessions already in an advanced stage of negotiations or agreed to in principle. Furthermore, there has been no real review of existing land concessions and none of the problematic ones have been cancelled.

Parliament notes that the EU is Cambodia's single largest donor. It calls on the Commission to investigate the escalation of human rights abuses in Cambodia as a result of economic land concessions being granted for agro-industrial development linked to the export of agricultural goods to the European Union, and to **temporarily suspend EBA preferences on agricultural products from Cambodia in cases where human rights abuses are identified**. It notes the decision of the Prime Minister of Cambodia to halt new economic land concessions and his pledge to review existing concessions.

The Cambodian authorities are to:

- cease all forced evictions, review the May 2012 directive and introduce and enforce a moratorium on evictions in Cambodia until a transparent and accountable legal framework and relevant policies are in place to ensure that future economic land concessions are granted in accordance with international human rights law and to ensure that all those forcibly evicted are guaranteed adequate compensation and suitable alternative accommodation;

- implement the recent UN recommendations on reforming the electoral system to ensure it conforms with international standards before, during and after the casting of votes. Members calls on the Commission closely to monitor the implementation of the UN recommendations by the Cambodian authorities;

- strengthen democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms – in particular media freedom and freedom of expression and assembly – as these values constitute an essential element of the EU-Cambodia Cooperation Agreement, as defined in Article 1 of that Agreement.