Resolution on the mass trials against the opposition and civil society in Cambodia

2021/2579(RSP) - 11/03/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 610 votes to 43, with 37 abstentions, a resolution on the mass trials against the opposition and civil society in Cambodia.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA, the Left groups.

Parliament condemned the escalating violations of human rights in Cambodia, including violence against peaceful protesters, the adoption of new repressive laws and the arrest of human rights defenders, journalists, opposition party activists, environmentalists, students and ordinary citizens for peacefully expressing their opinions. It called on the security forces to refrain from unnecessary and excessive force against those engaged in peaceful protests.

Moreover, Parliament urged the Cambodian Government to:

- end all forms of harassment, intimidation and politically motivated criminal charges against members of the opposition, trade unionists, human rights defenders, the media and civil society actors;

- immediately cease other forms of harassment, including judicial harassment and intimidation of opposition members in the country;

- release, without delay, all persons who have been detained for exercising their human rights, and to drop all charges against them;

- repeal all repressive laws, including the recent decrees and draft laws regulating the digital environment and enabling the government to increase online surveillance, censorship and control of the internet, as well as all other pieces of legislation limiting freedom of speech and political freedoms, and which are not fully in line with Cambodia’s obligations and international standards;

- restore democracy and ensure that the application of the law respects human rights and fundamental freedoms, which includes fully complying with the constitutional provisions on pluralism and freedom of association and expression.

Member States are called on to suspend all bilateral financial support to the Cambodian Government and instead focus on civil society organisations and opposition parties.

Lastly, the resolution called for targeted sanctions, including travel bans and asset freezes, against Cambodian leaders and their economic interests are overdue. It urged the Council to adopt restrictive measures against the political leaders and leaders of the security forces responsible for serious human rights violations, the dissolution and subsequent repression of the opposition in Cambodia, and against their economic interests under the EU global human rights sanctions regime.