Resolution on the situation in Cambodia

2005/2525(RSP) - 10/03/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted by 75 votes to 0, with 2 abstentions, a resolution on the situation in Cambodia.

The text adopted in plenary had been tabled as a joint resolution by the EPP-ED, PES, ALDE, Greens /EFA, GUE/NGL and UEN groups.

The resolution recalls that, on 3 February 2005, the National Assembly of Cambodia lifted the parliamentary immunity of three Members of Parliament belonging to the Sam Rainsy Party. The vote was taken by a show of hands, in violation of the Cambodian National Assembly's own regulations and procedures, and it was taken behind closed doors.

All three parliamentarians now face prosecution on charges ranging from criminal defamation to the formation of a secret military force to overthrow the government. Moreover, Cheam Channy was arrested on the same day, after a warrant has been issued by the Office of the Military Prosecutor, and transferred to the military prison in Phnom Penh on an allegation of organising an anti-government militia.

The Parliament believes that lifting the parliamentary immunity of opposition legislators creates a dangerous precedent which weakens the legislature as an independent institution of the state and the heart of democracy. It calls on the National Assembly of Cambodia to restore immunity immediately to all three Members of Parliament and to ensure that members of the opposition are allowed to sit on its parliamentary committees. It also calls on the government of Cambodia immediately and unconditionally to release Cheam Channy, who should not, as a civilian, be subject to military jurisdiction.

The Government and the Cambodian authorities are called upon to:

- abide by their international commitments, particularly the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified in 1992;
- put an end to persecution of political opponents and human rights activists in their country.

The Commission, the Council and the governments of the Member States are called upon to:

- raise this question with the Cambodian government and to consider imposing appropriate sanctions if the National Assembly and the government of Cambodia do not reverse their recent actions;
- in anticipation of the ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting to be held on 10 and 11 March 2005 in Jakarta, raise the concerns about the current political situation and the threats to democracy resulting from attempts to silence the political opposition in Cambodia.

The Parliament suggests that an EU ad hoc delegation visit Cambodia as soon as possible to evaluate the country's political situation.