



Human rights: Venezuela, Madagascar, Burma

Three human rights resolutions, on the media in Venezuela, the political crisis in Madagascar and the situation in Burma, were approved by Parliament on Thursday.

Venezuela

In a resolution tabled by the EPP, ALDE and ECR groups, MEPs voice concern at the drift towards authoritarianism shown by the government of President Hugo Chávez. In January 2010, RCTV International (RCTVI) and five other cable and satellite TV channels (TV Chile, Ritmo Son, Momentum, America TV and American Network) were ordered off the air.

These channels were criticised for failing to broadcast the presidential speech delivered on the occasion of the 52nd anniversary of the overthrow of Perez Jimenez.

MEPs call on the Venezuelan authorities to review this decision and the obligation to broadcast fully all speeches made by the Head of State. This new shut-down triggered a further wave of student protests, which were harshly suppressed by the police.

The 'National Telecommunications Commission' should show itself to be independent of the political and economic authorities and ensure equitable pluralism, says the European Parliament.

Madagascar

MEPs condemn Mr Rajoelina's seizure of power in Madagascar, "in flagrant violation of the provisions of the Madagascar Constitution", which they describe as "an outright coup d'état". They call for implementation of the accords signed in Maputo and Addis Ababa, which provided for power-sharing between the main political movements in the country.

Parliament also condemns Mr Rajoelina's plan to hold legislative elections in 2010, in violation of the accords signed under the auspices of the African Union.

The African Union and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have suspended Madagascar from their leading bodies. The European Union has decided to suspend funding from its various development programmes for Madagascar, with the exception of humanitarian aid.

The EP strongly condemns the decision by Mr Rajoelina to cancel the appointment of Eugene Mangalaza as Prime Minister, installed after a power-sharing deal between all political parties in October 2009. They also strongly condemn the decision by Mr Rajoelina to withdraw from power-sharing talks on 18 December 2009. The Maputo Agreement and the Addis Ababa Additional Act on Madagascar constitute "the only possible framework" for a solution to the political crisis in Madagascar, says the resolution.

Parliament expresses deep concern at the disappearance of several hundred people, including around 100 children and adolescents, and condemns the systematic repression of the opposition, censorship of the media and the intimidation and systematic arrest of journalists. It also calls for the disarmament and dissolution of the militias with a view to restoring a republican army.

Press release

Burma

Parliament calls for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and criticises the ban which prevents her standing at the next election, whose date has yet to be officially announced but is due to be held some time in 2010.

MEPs urge the Burmese authorities to ensure a free, fair, transparent and inclusive electoral process consistent with international standards. These are the first since the 1990 elections won by Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD).

The resolution also urges the ruling junta to put an immediate end to the recruitment of child soldiers. MEPs condemn the ethnic cleansing campaigns against minorities, in particular those seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. They also call on the Thai Government to continue providing shelter and protection to Karen refugees fleeing abuses.

The governments of China, India and Russia are asked to use their leverage with Rangoon to bring about substantial improvements in the country and to stop supplying the Burmese regime with weaponry. Lastly, Parliament calls on the Council to maintain the restrictive measures targeted against the Burmese regime until there is "tangible progress" on democratisation. At the same time, the Council is asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the restrictive measures.

Contact :

Thomas DUDRAP

AFET/DROI/SEDE

BXL: (+32) 2 28 44524

STR: (+33) 3 881 77015

PORT: (+32) 498 98 32 84

EMAIL: foreign-press@europarl.europa.eu