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- May, 2, 3, 2007

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- May 7,8,, 2007

#### **Subcommittee on Human Rights**

- May 2,3, 2007

#### **Subcommittee on security and defence**

- May 2,3, 2007

#### **Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and home affairs**

- May 7,8, 2007

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- May 2,3, 2007

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## REGIONS:

### AFRICA

#### Nigeria

##### ► Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the elections in Nigeria (27/04/2007)

The European Union (EU) is disappointed that the elections held on 14 and 21 April did not represent a significant progress in relation to 2003 elections in spite of the improvements provided by in the Electoral Act 2006. The EU is deeply concerned that these elections were marred by many irregularities and by violent incidents resulting in a high toll of victims. The EU expects that the persons responsible for this violence will be brought to justice.

In many states there were serious organisational problems, including late arrival of ballot papers. There were also well-substantiated reports of attempts to rig the voting. And there was evidence that the results at the polling stations were distorted after the count. The EU considers that there are sufficient provisions in the 1999 Nigerian Constitution and the 2006 Electoral Act to legally solve the irregularities and commends the independence shown by the Judiciary and in particular the newly established mechanisms developed by the Courts of Appeal.

The EU calls on all political actors to use peaceful means and to demonstrate responsibility by strictly using the legal procedures and not to fail the people of Nigeria. The EU looks to INEC and others to quickly provide the evidence which the electoral tribunals will need in order to complete their work as swiftly as possible. The EU also hopes that the Nigerian authorities will look sympathetically at the case for re-runs where there is proven evidence of serious electoral malpractice.

Nevertheless the EU appreciates the commitment of the poll workers and recognises the efforts of the police and the military. The EU particularly commends the engagement of civil society organisations. The EU also notes the observations made by national and international observers, including the EU Election Observer Mission that the elections ran well in some States and Local Government Areas or Districts.

Considering the determination of the Nigerian people to exercise their fundamental democratic right to vote, the EU remains committed to foster its engagement and dialogue with Nigerians in order to strengthen our mutual endeavour for good governance and democracy.

The EU is ready to engage into a dialogue with Nigeria, in particular in cooperation with ECOWAS, but also with the AU, the UN and the international community at large, with a view to support Nigeria to overcome post elections difficulties and to take into account lessons learnt in view of the next elections.

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/cfsp/93840.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/cfsp/93840.pdf)

#### Zimbabwe

► **Meps condemn Mugabe dictatorship** (26/04/2007)

In a resolution adopted on Thursday by 68 votes to 1 with 0 abstention, Parliament issues a hard-hitting condemnation of the Mugabe regime. MEPs call on Member States to apply the EU's existing restrictions on Zimbabwe strictly, including the arms embargo and the travel ban. They also urge that all aid to Zimbabwe be delivered exclusively through NGOs, the EU being the most important donor to the country.

In the wake of the violent break-up of the Save Zimbabwe Campaign prayer rally organised on 11 March this year by opponents of the regime - two people were killed and more than 300 were arrested - MEPs strongly condemn the Mugabe dictatorship for "its relentless oppression of the Zimbabwean people, opposition parties and civil society groups and its destruction of the Zimbabwean economy". The House condemns the murder of opposition activist Gift Tandare and the arrest of Morgan Tsvangirai, chairman of the Movement for Democratic Change, Nelson Chamisa, Grace Kwinjeh, Lovemore Madhuku, William Bango, Sekai Holland, Tendai Biti, Arthur Mutambara and many others treated brutally by the police forces.

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**Acknowledgment of crisis by neighbouring countries**

Parliament takes heart from one new development : "the recognition by SADC that a crisis exists in Zimbabwe and the appointment of President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa to facilitate dialogue between Zanu-PF and the opposition MDC".

**EU must apply its own measures in full**

However, the EU must play its part too, and Parliament calls on the Council "to ensure that all Member States rigorously apply existing restrictive measures, including the arms embargo and the travel ban". MEPs are also in favour of enlarging the list of banned individuals so that it encompasses even more of Mugabe's power structure, including government ministers, deputies and governors, military, the CIO and police personnel, and the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe. In addition, Parliament calls on the Council to ensure that no banned persons are invited to, or attend, the planned EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon in December this year. Aid, say MEPs, must be delivered through genuine non-governmental organisations and must reach the people for whom it is intended without being intercepted in any way by agents of the Mugabe regime. In 2006, the EU donated €193 million in total. The House backs the initiative of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly to send a delegation to Zimbabwe to "ascertain the situation on the ground". This investigation should be carried out as soon as possible. MEPs insist that the government of Zimbabwe grant access to the country to all members of any such delegation.

**Britain and South Africa urged to use their positions on the UN Security Council**

Lastly, the resolution calls on the United Kingdom, which assumed the Presidency of the United Nations Security Council this month, "to put Zimbabwe on the agenda of the Security Council", and "anticipates that South Africa will play a constructive role as a non-permanent member of the Security Council".

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress\\_page/030-5753-113-04-17-903-20070420IPR05699-23-04-2007-2007-false/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/030-5753-113-04-17-903-20070420IPR05699-23-04-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm)

► **European Parliament resolution on Zimbabwe** (26/04/2007)

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2007-0172+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

<b>AMERICAS</b>
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## ASIA

### Japan

- ▶ **EU Presidency Statement on Japan's ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court** (27/04/2007)

The Presidency of the European Union warmly welcomes today's decision taken by the parliament of Japan to accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

**Japan's ratification marks a further significant step forward in the international community's efforts to combat impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. We hope that Japan's accession will encourage other countries in Asia to consider a representation at the Court.**

The European Union has long supported Japan's ratification of the Rome Statute and is convinced that Japan will make a highly valuable contribution to the Court's work.

On this occasion the Presidency would like to reiterate the European Union's commitment to the universality and integrity of the Rome Statute and calls upon states which have not yet done so to accede to the Rome Statute in due course.

[http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP\\_Statements/April/0427Japan.html](http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/April/0427Japan.html)

### Philippines

- ▶ **Philippines: political killings a growing problem** (26/04/2007).

**In a resolution on the Philippines, adopted by 68 votes to 0 with 0 abstentions, Parliament draws attention to the number of politically motivated killings in the country, which it says has risen dramatically in recent years, as well as the general human rights situation in the country.**

The local human rights organisation Karapatan has recorded 180 forced disappearances and over 800 killings, most of them by unidentified gunmen, since 2001. Most of those killed, such as opposition party members, church people, community leaders, peasants, journalists, lawyers, human rights activists, trade unionists, have been accused by the government of being front organisations for illegal armed groups and 'terrorists'.

In a positive development, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has appointed a high-level independent commission to examine the problem and a national-level police task force to investigate the killings. The commission's findings indicate army involvement in the political killings. In response to its recommendations, President Arroyo has issued a 6-point plan to stop the killings. However, MEPs believe all this is far from enough.

*Authorities urged to investigate rise in political killings*

In its resolution Parliament expresses **"grave concern at the increasing number of political killings that have occurred in recent years in the Philippines and "urges the Philippine authorities to make the necessary investigations in a timely, thorough and transparent manner and to bring those responsible to justice"**.

It also **"condemns in the strongest terms the murder of Ms Siche Bustamante-Gandinao, a dedicated human rights activist....and is concerned about the lack of any police investigation concerning this important case"**

*Anti-terrorism measures likely to lead to arbitrary arrests*

MEPs believe that "the adoption of the Human Security Act 2007, which will enter into force in July 2007, is liable to further increase the incidence of human rights violations by the Security Forces because it will allow arrest without warrant and arbitrary detention". Parliament also "denounces attacks on legal opposition groups".

It welcomes the progress made but says the government must "adopt measures to end the systematic intimidation and harassment of witnesses in connection with prosecutions for killings" and "ensure truly effective witness protection".

It is also important "to stop inciting violence towards certain political or civil-society groups and to restore normal accountability mechanisms to check government abuses". The Ombudsman is urged to "take seriously his constitutional role in responding to extrajudicial killings attributed to public officials".

*Abolition of death penalty welcomed*

While welcoming the signing by President Arroyo of legislation abolishing the death penalty in the Philippines, the EP calls on the Philippines to ratify the newly adopted UN Convention on Enforced Disappearances.

*Call for freedom of political expression ahead of elections*

The climate of impunity "has a corrosive impact on public confidence in the rule of law" and the killings are "creating a climate in which people in the Philippines cannot feel free to exercise their rights of political expression and association", says the resolution. The President is urged to "take immediate action in order to prevent the risk of further escalation of violence before and during the upcoming polls".

Lastly, those applying for the redistribution of land under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Programme must be protected and indeed the land reform programme must be accelerated in order to curb one of the root causes of political violence, say MEPs.

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress\\_page/015-5754-113-04-17-902-20070420IPR05700-23-04-2007-2007-false/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-5754-113-04-17-902-20070420IPR05700-23-04-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm)

- ▶ **European Parliament resolution of 26 April 2007 on the human rights situation in the Philippines** (26/04/2007)

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2007-0171+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

Russia

► **Russia: free speech under further pressure as elections approach** (26/04/2007)

Looking ahead to the upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections in Russia, today's resolution focuses on the recent demonstrations in Moscow and St. Petersburg and related free speech issues. It follows Parliament's resolutions of 25 October 2006 on the murder of journalist Anna Politkovskaya and of 13 December 2006 on EU-Russia relations.

***Attacks on demonstrations part of deteriorating climate for free speech in Russia***

The resolution, adopted by 65 votes to 0 with 2 abstentions, refers to the rally of Russian opposition members - including Garry Kasparov and former prime minister Mikhail Kasyanov - in Moscow's Pushkin Square on 14 April, which was broken up by security forces. Demonstrators and journalists were beaten and detained. A protest held on 15 April in St Petersburg was also broken up.

**Parliament believes that "the Russian authorities, in the run-up to the parliamentary and presidential elections, are increasing pressure on opposition groups and non-governmental organisations to refrain from any activities directed against the president and the government and to prevent the media from reporting any such activities".**

It argues that **"democracy has been weakened in Russia, in particular by the bringing of all major TV stations and most radio stations under government control, the spread of self-censorship among the print media, new restrictions on the right to organise public demonstrations and a worsening climate for NGOs"**

***Police repression condemned***

Parliament therefore **"strongly condemns the use of excessive force by the Russian anti-riot police during last weekend's peaceful demonstrations in Moscow and St Petersburg and calls on the Russian authorities to comply with their international obligations and to respect freedom of expression and freedom of assembly". It "condemns in particular the repressive actions used by the security forces against journalists doing their professional duty".**

More broadly, MEPs are **"deeply disturbed by an emerging pattern of use of excessive force by the Russian authorities towards opposition activists", which "raises deep concern about the situation of democracy and respect for human rights in the Russian Federation".**

***Investigations demanded***

Russia's human rights ombudsman said police in both cities had exceeded their authority and the governor of St Petersburg ordered an investigation into human rights violations at the rally in her city. Backing these moves, the EP urges "the Russian State Duma to set up a working group to investigate why such force was used against peaceful demonstrators". It also "calls on the Council of Europe to investigate the human rights violations at the rallies"

With a view to the elections, Parliament calls on the Russian leadership to "guarantee all political parties and movements a chance to take part in the democratic process" and on the Central Election Commission and the Russian judiciary "to be vigilant, objective and impartial in scrutinising the campaign and election processes". The authorities are urged to respect the democratic standards laid down by the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

*EU action*

**The resolution repeats the EP's call for the EU-Russia Human Rights Dialogue to be stepped up "so as to make it more effective and result-oriented", while fully involving the EP at all levels, with a view to strengthening this element in the new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement to be negotiated**



soon (the current one expires in 2007). Meanwhile, the resolution asks the Commission and the Council to express the above concerns clearly in their contacts with the Russian Government, in particular at the next EU-Russian Summit to be held on 18 May 2007 in Samara.

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress\\_page/015-5754-113-04-17-902-20070420IPR05700-23-04-2007-2007-false/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-5754-113-04-17-902-20070420IPR05700-23-04-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm)

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<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2007-0169+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

**MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST**

**Syria**

► **EU Presidency statement on the sentencing of Syrian human rights lawyer Anwar Al-Bunni** (24/04/2007).

The Presidency expresses its regret that Anwar al-Bunni, a prominent Syrian human rights defender, was sentenced to five years of detention in Damascus on 24 April 2007 for having disseminated human rights-related material. The European Union is deeply concerned by the repeated harassment of human rights defenders in Syria.

The European Union calls on the Syrian Government to support and give full effect to the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which the UN General Assembly adopted by consensus in December 1998.

The European Union reiterates its commitment to the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders adopted by the European Council in June 2004.

[http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP\\_Statements/April/0424Syrien.html](http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/CFSP_Statements/April/0424Syrien.html)

**Gaza**

► **EP resolution for the release of BBC journalist Alan Johnston** (26/04/2007)

BBC journalist Alan Johnston was abducted at gunpoint on 12 March 2007 whilst returning home in Gaza City and his whereabouts have remained unknown since that date. In their resolution today, MEPs express their support for his family and colleagues and call for Mr Johnston's immediate release. Earlier in the day BBC journalists had gathered in the European Parliament in Strasbourg to read out a letter from their colleagues to MEPs.

The resolution, adopted unanimously, points out that the Palestinian media community, public and politicians from all sides have condemned the kidnapping and are calling for his immediate release, proving the extent to which his work is appreciated by the local population

**Parliament stresses that press freedom is "of primary importance for democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms".** The abduction of Mr Johnston - who has remained in Gaza

during a period of increased violence, precisely to report on what is happening there to the outside world - is not an isolated case. As international journalists' associations point out, fifteen foreign journalists have been kidnapped in Gaza since August 2005, and thousands of journalists around the world face the threat of kidnapping, violence and intimidation every day.

### ***Appeal for safe return***

The resolution "calls for Alan Johnston to be immediately and unconditionally released unharmed and returned to safety". Parliament "pays tribute to Mr Johnston's record as a journalist of the highest integrity, with a record of sixteen years working for the BBC and, in particular, the past three years spent in Gaza, where he has been the only permanently based foreign journalist from a major media organisation".

### ***Solidarity with family and colleagues***

It expresses "warm support for Mr Johnston's family in these difficult circumstances, and for his BBC colleagues and management, who have been campaigning tirelessly to build public and political support for his release". MEPs also express solidarity with the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and its member unions, including the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate, "in their efforts to secure Mr Johnston's release and their campaign for a new global commitment to ending threats to independent journalism". They recall in this regard the appeal delivered by the IFJ to the leaders of the Palestinian Authority on 19 April, with the signatures of 197 Members of the European Parliament.

### ***Efforts must be stepped up***

Although "no group has claimed responsibility", President Abbas "has confirmed publicly that there is credible evidence that Mr Johnston is alive, that he is being held in secure conditions and that there is information as to which group is holding him". MEPs therefore urge the Palestinian Authority to "redouble its efforts to secure Mr Johnston's speedy release".

Continued and strengthened support is also requested from the European Commission Technical Assistance Office to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, EU Member States' diplomatic representatives and the High Representative for the CFSP.

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress\\_page/015-5754-113-04-17-902-20070420IPR05700-23-04-2007-2007-false/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-5754-113-04-17-902-20070420IPR05700-23-04-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm)

### **THEMATIC :**

<b>FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES</b>
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<b>JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS</b>
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## European Parliament

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## EXTERNAL RELATIONS & DEVELOPMENT-RELATED ISSUES

## European Parliament

- ▶ **European Parliament resolution of 26 April 2007 on the initiative for a universal moratorium on the death penalty** (26/04/2007)

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2007-0166+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

## EU / UN REFORM

## MISCELLANEOUS

## EU Foreign Ministers Council

- ▶ **EU Foreign Ministers discuss international issues ranging from Central Asia to Sudan** (24/04/2007)

The extensive agenda included such important issues as the EU strategy on Central Asia, the Middle East, the Sudan/Darfur, Zimbabwe, Somalia and the EU-US Summit. On Monday the Foreign Ministers of the EU Member States gathered in Luxembourg for their monthly meeting within the framework of the General Affairs and External Relations Council. At the start of the final press conference, Federal Foreign Minister Steinmeier paid tribute to the first President of the Russian Federation following his unexpected death. "President Yeltsin turned his eyes towards Europe and opened Russia to the world."

### **Central Asia – preparation of an EU strategy**

Following an initial successful meeting of the EU Foreign Minister Troika with the five Central Asian countries Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on 28 March 2007, the Council President outlined the components of the EU strategy on Central Asia to his colleagues in today's session. Specifically, these cover the areas of the rule of law, **human rights** and democratization; education; energy and transport; the environment; trade and economic cooperation as well as regional security issues such as border protection and the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime. Later, EU Council President Steinmeier, explaining to the press the significance of the strategy on Central Asia, said, "We are pursuing what you might call farsighted security policy." The ministers, who approved the outlined components and stressed the significance of EU relations with Central Asia, will build on today's consultations at their meeting in June 2007 and submit the strategy document to the EU Heads of State and Government in June.

### **Statement on the security situation in the Sudan/Darfur**

UN Special Envoy Jan Eliasson told the ministers of violations of the arms embargo, clashes between Arab tribes and splits within warring groups in the Sudan. The ministers were "deeply concerned about the appalling security situation". There is apparently no sign of a reduction in the violence and law-breaking. On the contrary, a recent series of groundless attacks on the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) in defiance of an agreed ceasefire has claimed the lives of nine members of the peacekeeping troops in the last four weeks. Most recently, an AMIS officer was shot dead in the Sudanese city of El Fasher on 14 April 2007.

Eliasson added that the Darfur crisis was also exacerbating the existing tensions between the Sudan and its neighbour, Chad.

The arrangement between the Sudanese Government, the UN and the African Union (AU) on the implementation of the heavy support package was welcomed. The UN's heavy support package comprises the second stage of a three-stage plan to restore peace to the Darfur region. However, the ministers also felt that the third stage, the deployment of a full-scale "hybrid" AU-UN mission in Darfur, was "urgently needed". In their conclusions the ministers announced that they would consider further measures for any conflict party which impeded the implementation of the necessary steps.

#### **Extension of visa sanctions in Zimbabwe**

The ministers expressed their concern about the "rapidly deteriorating situation" in Zimbabwe. However, they regarded the mandate granted to South African President Mbeki by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to mediate between the opposition and the Government as a positive move. In response to the "violence and human rights infringements in Zimbabwe" the ministers agreed to extend visa sanctions to include further Government representatives. The ministers had already imposed an arms embargo on Zimbabwe and frozen the assets of influential individuals at previous Council meetings.

#### **Concern about the resurgence of violence in Somalia**

The ministers expressed their concern about the resurgence of violence in Somalia and their sadness at the loss of civilian lives, particularly "the random firing on densely populated districts of Mogadishu". In their final statement the ministers assured the Transitional Federal Government in Somalia that they would provide "financial and other support" for the planned national reconciliation congress on condition that all key stakeholders were involved in a national reconciliation process.

#### **Strengthening of the commitment of the Middle East Quartet in the Middle East peace process**

The General Affairs and External Relations Council also discussed progress in the Middle East peace process. The ministers welcomed the commitment of the Middle East Quartet (EU, UN, US, Russia). Council President Steinmeier said he was pleased that the Arab League had reiterated its support for the "land for peace" initiative. He said that the Middle East Quartet would now strive for further contact with the Arab side, particularly the Arab League. In this context the ministers welcomed the intention of President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert to meet regularly. Substantial negotiations could lead to "an end to the occupation which has lasted since 1967 and to the creation of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state".

#### **Preparation of the EU-US Summit and the meeting with the Gulf Cooperation Council**

In Luxembourg the ministers also drove forward the necessary preparations for meeting with the Gulf Cooperation Council due to take place in Riyadh on 8 May and the EU-US Summit planned for 30 April in Washington. The German EU Presidency reported on the current status of preparations for the EU-US Summit and presented the draft of the Summit document for discussion. The Summit will focus on three main topics: the expansion of transatlantic economic relations, energy and climate protection as well as foreign and security policy.

In the margins of the EU Foreign Ministers Council, the EU-Russia Troika also convened.

[http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Press\\_Releases/April/0424AARAA1.html](http://www.eu2007.de/en/News/Press_Releases/April/0424AARAA1.html)

### **EP's 2006 annual report on Human Rights**

#### **► MEPs take stock of EU record on human rights protection in 2006 (26/04/2007)**

Today, 26 April, the European Parliament gave overwhelming backing to the EP's 2006 annual report - drafted by Simon Coveney (EPP-ED, IE) - on Human Rights in the World. MEPs expressed particular concern about the situation in Russia, China and Iran; the EU and its institutions did not escape criticism.

The 2006 report assesses the human rights activities of the Commission and the Council -- and the overall performance of the Parliament in this field. It focuses on EU policies with respect to human rights offenders, submits criticism of EU actions and makes concrete policy recommendations.

### Human rights violations worldwide

**China's human rights record is still a matter of "serious concern" and should thus "receive more focus in the build-up to the Beijing Olympic games"** note MEPs, emphasising, at the same time, **the need to strengthen and improve the EU-China human rights dialogue**. That said, members urge the Council and Commission **"to raise the question of Tibet" in talks with the Beijing government. The Union's trade relations with Beijing, they add, should be contingent upon human rights reform.**

Expressing their "deep concern regarding the deterioration of the human rights situation" in **Iran** -- notably, **"the intensification of the repression against human rights defenders"** -- the EP **"calls on the Council to express concern about the [situation] in all its contacts with the Iranian government"**. It also calls on the **Commission to use the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) to promote contacts and cooperation with Iranian civil society.**

The House also reserves **strong criticism** for the **Russian** government, "regretting" that the EU has had "only limited success in bringing about policy change as a result of raising difficult issues" -- such as the situation in Chechnya, the treatment of human rights defenders, and freedom of expression. The report goes on **to "deplore Russian legislation limiting the activities of NGOs", as well as the fact "that journalists and human rights defenders have been threatened"**. It remains "appalled" at the murder of Anna Politkovskaja" and is concerned about allegations of Russian involvement in the poisoning of Alexander Litvinenko and of the mistreatment of Mikhail Khodorkovsky while in detention. **The Parliament "urges the Commission and Council to raise such cases with the Russian authorities at the highest level and in the new PCA with Russia"**.

**"Regretting" that the EU has not taken "more unilateral action"** to persuade the **Sudanese** government to accept an international peacekeeping force in Darfur, **the report urges the EU to back "an international peacekeeping force" and "the enforcement of the no-fly zone over Darfur"**. The Council, it goes on to say, should agree "a plan of specific, targeted sanctions to be imposed on the Khartoum regime [...]" in the event of non-compliance with the demands of the international community."

The report also:

- recognises **attempts to set up a human rights dialogue with Uzbekistan, but considers that such a dialogue should not automatically "lead to the lifting of sanctions [...] if no progress is made in the area of human rights and democracy"**;

- is concerned with the "limited progress" on human rights issues in **Turkey** and **encourages the Ankara government to change Article 301 of the Penal Code**;

**-urges the adoption of "more effective and targeted sanctions" against the government of Myanmar** in light of the country's deteriorating human rights situation;

- **proposes that the temporary international mechanism be expanded and ways be explored to resume direct aid** to the **Palestinian** territories;

- **urges the Commission "to review its policy tools vis-à-vis Libya"** given Tripoli's failure to ensure a fair

trial for five Bulgarian nurses and one Palestinian doctor accused of intentionally infecting children with the AIDS virus;

- calls on the Council and the Commission to urge the US government to “**charge or release**” **Guantánamo detainees** “**in accordance with international law**”;

- expresses “strong disapproval” of US efforts “to actively prevent other countries from ratifying the **Rome Statute** [of the ICC]” and urges the Czech Republic, “as the only remaining EU Member State not have ratified the Statute, to do so without delay”;

- points to “**the need to support** the **Belarusian** political opposition”;

- asks that the EU **include the issue of persecution on the basis of sexual orientation in its discussions on human rights with third countries.**

### **Criticism of EU action on human rights**

The report also makes some criticisms of the EU institutions’ activity in the area of human rights. It asks the Council to explain “how it was possible for **Belarus** to be elected onto the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in June 2005” – even though “four major EU countries are permanent members of that Governing Body.” It also notes “with total stupefaction” the provisional suspension by ECHO of humanitarian aid for **Iraq**, despite “the disastrous situation afflicting the suffering Iraqi people and Iraqi refugees”

MEPs note that the Union, in its texts, attempts “to link **immigration and development** and ensure that the fundamental rights of immigrants are respected”. Still, they maintain, “the reality on the ground gives the lie to the texts”: readmission agreements are being concluded with third countries that do not have the legal and institutional machinery to handle the readmission of nationals and protect their rights.

The United Nations does not escape criticism, either, particularly with regard to its newly created **Human Rights Council** (UNHRC). Although “the new UNHRC has the potential to develop into a valuable framework for the EU’s multilateral human rights efforts”, say MEPs, it has proven “ineffectual in responding appropriately to human rights crises” – this being due to “the use of the UNHRC by many states as a forum for political pressure instead of the promotion of human rights”. The EP points to “the need for the EU to make more effective use of its leverage in order to promote important issues on the agenda of the UNHRC”.

### **Recommendations**

The report closes with a host of recommendations to the Council and Commission. Both institutions, it insists, should raise the situation of **human rights defenders** in all political dialogues. EU missions ought to “reach out to local human rights defenders in a more proactive manner”, while the Council should take steps “to facilitate the issuing of visas for all human rights defenders”.

MEPs also say that EU Presidencies should continue the approach of promoting the abolition of the **death penalty**; the Council should “reassess the procedure for **listing terrorist groups** and [...] consider a clear method for taking groups off the list”; the Commission, as Chair of the Kimberley Process throughout 2007, should strengthen the mechanisms designed to stem the flow of **conflict diamonds**; both Council and Commission should act to ensure that Member States move to ban **cluster bombs**.

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress\\_page/015-5965-113-04-17-902-20070426IPR05964-23-04-2007-2007-true/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-5965-113-04-17-902-20070426IPR05964-23-04-2007-2007-true/default_en.htm)

