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REGIONS:

AFRICA

Ethiopia

► **European Parliament resolution on Ethiopia** (16/11/06)

(...)

A. disturbed by the arrest and expulsion from Ethiopia of two Commission officials on the alleged grounds that they tried to help Yalemzewd Bekele, a lawyer and women's rights campaigner, working for the Commission in Addis Ababa, to leave the country,

B. whereas there are reports of **continuing arrests, harassment, arbitrary detention, humiliation and intimidation of opposition politicians, civil society activists, students and other ordinary citizens,**

C. whereas, following high-level EU intervention on her behalf, Yalemzewd Bekele was released on 27 October 2006 after being held incommunicado for a few days,

D. whereas the Ethiopian Parliament established a government-backed Commission of Inquiry in late November 2005 with the task of investigating the June and November 2005 killings,

E. whereas the Ethiopian Government has put pressure on the members of the Commission of Inquiry to alter the findings and whereas three of the members, including the chairman and vice-chairman, have left the country after refusing government orders to alter the findings of the final report,

F. whereas the members of the Commission of Inquiry managed to leave the country with the final report, and whereas the report overwhelmingly condemns the government's handling of the crisis, which left 193 citizens dead following demonstrations in June and November 2005,

G. whereas, following the mass arrests of government opponents, human rights activists and journalists during demonstrations in June and November 2005, 111 opposition party leaders, journalists and human rights defenders are still in custody and are facing trial on charges including 'outrage against the constitution', 'inciting, organising or leading an armed rebellion' and 'attempted genocide',

H. recalling that post-election political detainees include Hailu Shawel, President of the Coalition for Unity and Democracy, Professor Mesfin Woldemariam, former Chair of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council, Dr Yacob Hailemariam, former UN Special Envoy and former prosecutor in the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, Birtukan Mideksa, former judge, Dr Berhanu Nega, Mayor-elect of Addis Ababa, Netsanet Demissie, Director of the Organisation for Social Justice in Ethiopia, and Daniel Bekele, of ActionAid Ethiopia,

I. concerned at the recent arrest of Wassihun Melese and Anteneh Getnet, members of the Ethiopian Teachers' Association, and that these new arrests seem to be a response to Ethiopian Teachers' Association complaints about government interference in its activities and intimidation of its leaders,

J. whereas Prime Minister Meles Zenawi is one of the Commission's guests at the European Development Days, which are being held in Brussels from 13 to 17 November 2006,

K. whereas Ethiopia is a signatory to the ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement, Articles 9 and 96 of which stipulate that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is an essential element of ACP-EU cooperation,

1. Welcomes the EU's efforts to secure the release of Yalemzewd Bekele and regrets deeply the expulsion from Ethiopia of Commission officials Björn Jonsson and Enrico Sborgi;

2. Calls on the Ethiopian Government to publish unamended and in its entirety, and without any further delay, the final report of the Commission of Inquiry; calls for the relevant courts to be supplied with the report, and urges them to take due account of it so that fair trials can be conducted;

3. Calls on the Ethiopian authorities to refrain from acts of intimidation and harassment against national leaders, including court judges and members of the Ethiopian Teachers' Association, carrying out their professional obligations;

4. Calls on the Ethiopian Government immediately and unconditionally to release all political prisoners, whether journalists, trade union activists, human rights defenders or ordinary citizens, and to fulfil its obligations with respect to human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law;

5. Calls on the Ethiopian Government to disclose the total number of persons detained throughout the country, to allow visits by the International Committee of the Red Cross, and to allow all detainees access to their families, legal counsel and any medical care that their health may require;

6. Calls on the Ethiopian Government to respect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Union Charter on Human and People's Rights, including the right of peaceful assembly, freedom of opinion, and an independent judicial system;

7. Deeply regrets the Commission's invitation to Prime Minister Meles Zenawi to address the European Development Days, especially on governance issues, a decision which sends out the wrong signal with regard to EU policy on respect for human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance;

8. Asks the Council and the Commission to monitor closely the situation in Ethiopia, and considers that development cooperation programmes under the Cotonou Agreement should be contingent on respect for human rights and good governance, as clearly set out in Articles 9 and 96;

9. Calls on the Council and the Commission to explore ways of organising an all-inclusive inter-Ethiopian dialogue with the participation of political parties, civil society organisations and all stakeholders in order to work out a lasting solution to the current political crisis;

10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Ethiopian Government, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairperson of the African Union.

Democratic Republic of Korea

► UN: Re-introduction Statement on behalf of EU on situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (19/11/06)

[UN 61st Session; III Committee, Agenda Item 67(c): Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Re-introduction Statement on behalf of the European Union by Ms. Satu Suikkari, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Finland to the UN] (New York, 17 November 2006)

“ Mr. Chairperson,

On behalf of the European Union, Japan and all co-sponsors, I have the honour to introduce under agenda item 67(c) the **draft resolution entitled “Situation of Human Rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea” contained in document A/61/C.3/L.37.**

In addition to the cosponsors listed in L.37, this resolution has also been co-sponsored by Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Honduras Iceland, the Federated States of Micronesia, Monaco, Montenegro, Nicaragua, Palau, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

Mr. Chairperson, the European Union again attempted to initiate a dialogue with the DPRK authorities regarding this resolution, as we would have welcomed the opportunity for constructive dialogue on it. We sincerely regret that our overtures were rejected. In the absence of any willingness to engage on the part of the DPRK, we ourselves have therefore endeavoured to present in this text as balanced a picture as possible about the situation of human rights in the DPRK. Thus, we have highlighted the developments welcomed by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK, Vitit Muntarbhorn, in his latest report, in particular the DPRK’s submission of reports to certain treaty bodies. We sincerely hope that that engagement will continue and intensify.

However, as the Special Rapporteur himself observes in his report, in the DPRK **“there is still a huge gap between formal recognition of human rights and substantive implementation of human rights”**. You will therefore find that this draft draws attention once again to **the continued reports of the systematic, widespread and grave violations of human rights perpetuated by the absence of due process and rule of law.**

The draft resolution also focuses on the Government of the DPRK’s continued refusal to even recognise the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, far less to cooperate with him or act on any of his recommendations, or on any recommendations of the General Assembly or the Commission on Human Rights. We also regret DPRK’s continued failure to engage in any technical cooperation activities with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and her Office, despite her efforts to engage in dialogue in that regard.

So long as the government continues to refuse the offers of advice, assistance and capacity-building from the UN system in the field of human rights, we in the international community have little choice but to continue drawing attention to the deplorable situation. It is only by this means that the plight of the people of the DPRK can be heard.

We urge member states to demonstrate their solidarity to the people of DPRK by supporting this resolution once again.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. ”

http://eu2006.fi/news_and_documents/other_documents/vko46/en_GB/1163952128944/

AMERICAS

Bangladesh

► European Parliament resolution on Bangladesh (16/11/06)

(...)A. welcoming the fact that a caretaker government has been formed and is entrusted with the task of preparing for the next parliamentary elections in Bangladesh, but noting with concern that many of the necessary preconditions in terms of the neutrality of electoral preparations have yet to be met,

B. welcoming the fact that Bangladesh is a very important partner of the European Union, which has made progress in its economic performance; noting, however, that the country continues to suffer from serious political difficulties, massive corruption, poverty, widespread popular discontent and Islamist militancy,

C. whereas the compilation of the electoral register has been heavily criticised by domestic and international observers; whereas according to an estimate by the Commission, 13 million invalid names have been added to the register,

D. whereas in 2006, three journalists were killed and at least 95 others were attacked, and 55 press correspondents were the targets of intimidation because of articles considered to be "non-Islamic"; and whereas in the course of the year, more than 70 journalists have been forced to flee the country following threats, according to reports of "Reporters sans Frontières" on press freedom in Bangladesh,

E. having regard to the particularly shocking case of Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury, director of the Bangladeshi newspaper Weekly Blitz, journalist who advocates dialogue between religions and recognition of Israel, who was arrested on 29 November 2003 and is in danger of being condemned to death at his trial for sedition, which was due to open on 13 November 2006,

F. whereas violence perpetrated by paramilitary organisations with an Islamist orientation decreased as a result of steps taken by the former government in the latter part of its tenure,

G. whereas Bangladesh has had a longstanding tradition of secular democracy, including respect for human rights and women's rights, independence of the judiciary and freedom of the press;

H. whereas the EU has welcomed the arrest of two suspected terrorist leaders, and considers this to be a significant achievement which demonstrates Bangladesh's commitment to the fight against terrorism,

I. whereas in spring 2006, the government took drastic measures to curb extremism, but whereas Islamist groups continue openly to target members of religious minority communities,

1. Deplores recent acts of violence and strongly condemns the physical attacks on journalists, NGO staff, trade unionists and others, and the violence related to the forthcoming general election and the transitional arrangements;

2. Recognises the importance of the elections and calls for a strong and decisive caretaker government, which will counteract instability and instil confidence in free and fair parliamentary elections conducted in accordance with international standards, with the participation of all parties and within the planned timeframe;

3. Calls on the Bangladeshi Caretaker Government, led by President Iajuddin Ahmed, to take immediate steps to reconstitute the Election Commission, so as to ensure that it can perform, and can be seen to perform, its work in a truly neutral manner;
4. Calls on the Caretaker Government to create a climate in which all members of the electorate will feel genuinely free to use their right to vote, notably by disarming supporters of Islamist groups engaged in actions and propaganda characterised by religious intolerance;
5. Calls on the Election Commission, in cooperation with domestic and international experts, to improve the quality and accuracy of the voter register;
6. Calls on the BNP, the AL and all other political parties to reach agreement on all controversial electoral issues, to avoid political violence and instability and to develop political programmes which will improve the standard of the population's living conditions;
7. Calls for a review of the trial, and for the acquittal, of Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury, the charges against whom run counter to all the standards of international law and the conventions against violations of press freedom;
8. Calls on the authorities **to put an end to the climate of impunity and to bring to justice the perpetrators of violence and harassment directed towards journalists in Bangladesh;**
9. Calls on the Council and the **Commission to monitor carefully the human rights situation, the political situation and press freedom in Bangladesh and to draw up programmes in the framework of EU-Bangladesh cooperation to promote freedom of the press and freedom of speech;**
10. Calls on the Caretaker Government to guarantee media balance during the election campaign;
11. Reaffirms its commitment to Bangladesh's unique tradition of religious tolerance and secularism, as enshrined in the country's longstanding cultural traditions and artistic heritage, and as endorsed in Parliament's previous resolutions;
12. Welcomes the recent conviction by a court of two Islamic militants for murdering a Christian convert, but condemns the imposition of a death penalty;
13. Welcomes the Commission's decision to send an EU Election Observation Mission to observe the forthcoming general election, and urges the rapid establishment of a short-term political Election Observation Mission by Parliament;
14. Calls on the Commission to use its good offices with other donors and with the Bangladeshi Government to promote the adoption of effective measures in line with the provisions of this resolution;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Caretaker Government of Bangladesh, the Election Commission of Bangladesh and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-20060502+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

Kyrgyzstan

- ▶ ▶ Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the latest developments in Kyrgyzstan (15/11/06)

The European Union welcomes the signing of the new Kyrgyz constitution by President Kurmanbek Bakiev. This marks a significant step in the democratic development of Kyrgyzstan.

The EU is satisfied with the non-violent resolution of the tense political situation in Kyrgyzstan, achieved through negotiations and consultations between the authorities and various political forces, with all sides respecting the established legal order.

The EU hopes that the signing of the new constitution will lead to peaceful development in Kyrgyzstan, based on respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The EU encourages political dialogue between all the relevant political forces in order to stabilize the situation.

The EU recalls that it welcomed the process of democratic renewal that started in Kyrgyzstan in March 2005. It reiterates its commitment to supporting the Kyrgyz government and people on the path of reform, including strengthening the rule of law and democratic institutions, the freedom of the press and the fight against corruption.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/91733.pdf

MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST

Iran

- ▶ European Parliament resolution on Iran (16/11/06)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Iran, notably those concerning human rights,
- having regard to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to all of which Iran is a party,
- having regard to the EU-Iran Human Rights Dialogue,
- having regard to the 8th EU Annual Report on Human Rights (2006), adopted by the Council on 17 October 2006,
- having regard to the EU Presidency statement of 20 December 2005 on the EU-Iran Human Rights Dialogue,
- having regard to the Council Conclusions of 10 to 11 April, 15 to 16 May and 17 July 2006, the Council statement of 26 July 2006 on Freedom of Expression, the Council statement of 5 May 2006 on Human Rights in Iran, the Council statement of 24 August 2006 on the death of Akbar Mohammadi and the imprisonment of Manouchehr Mohammadi and the Council statement of 5 October 2006 on Freedom of the Press,

– having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

General situation

A. whereas the situation in Iran regarding the exercise of civil rights and political freedoms has deteriorated in the last year, notably since the presidential elections of June 2005, despite several commitments by the Iranian authorities to promote universal values,

B. whereas Iran has **undertaken to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms under the various international instruments in this field,**

Political prisoners

C. whereas the Iranian authorities have announced that **a report prepared by the judiciary had produced detailed evidence of human rights violations, including torture and ill-treatment of prisoners and detainees in prisons and detention centres, but also had confirmed that measures had been taken to address the problems identified,**

D. whereas nonetheless **the practice of torture and ill-treatment of prisoners, solitary confinement, clandestine detention, cruel, inhumane and degrading punishment and impunity for State agents continue to be widespread,**

E. **concerned that the Centre for Defence of Human Rights (CDHR), co-founded by the 2003 Nobel peace laureate Shirin Ebadi and provider of pro-bono legal defence to Zahra Kazemi, Akbar Ganji and Abdoufatah Soltani, was declared an illegal organisation by President Ahmadinejad in August 2006 and that the Ministry of the Interior has threatened those who continued their activities with prosecution,**

Prosecution of juvenile offenders

F. **deeply concerned about the increasing reports regarding the sentencing to death and execution of juvenile offenders, while noting that Iran accounts for the highest number of juvenile executions worldwide,**

Minority rights

G. whereas some minority rights are granted by the Iranian Constitution, such as the right of minorities to their own language, but to a large extent such rights cannot be exercised in practice; **whereas in recent months minority groups have demonstrated, calling to be allowed to exercise such rights, which has led large-scale imprisonment of participants,**

H. whereas the Azeris, the largest ethnic minority in Iran, were openly offended by cartoons as an ethnic minority grouping by a State-owned daily newspaper in May 2006; **whereas other minorities continue to be discriminated against and harassed due to their religious or ethnic background, such as the Kurds and the inhabitants of the area around Ahwaz city, the provincial capital of the ethnic Arab-dominated Khuzestan province, who are for example being displaced from their villages according to statements by Miloon Kothari, UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, while some of them remain in detention or have been sentenced to death,**

Freedom of religion

I. whereas, apart from Islam, only Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Judaism are recognised as religions by law, while **those who practise unrecognised religions, such as Baha'is and Sufis, are discriminated against and violently repressed; whereas notably the Baha'is cannot exercise their religion and are**

moreover consequently deprived of all civil rights, such as their rights to property and access to higher education,

J. whereas **even members of the clergy opposing Iran's theocratic regime are at risk, as witnessed by the case of Ayatollah Sayed Bouroujerdi, who was arrested with his followers in October 2006, and whereas they are still detained,**

Freedom of the press

K. **particularly concerned about the increasing reports of arbitrary arrests of and threats against journalists, cyber-journalists and bloggers; whereas at least 16 journalists have reportedly been arrested since the beginning of the year, ranking Iran among the very worst countries in the world for the prosecution of journalists and for its crackdown on press freedom by closing virtually all critical newspapers and online magazines, in which connection family members are being harassed, travel bans imposed on journalists and satellite dishes confiscated,**

L. whereas, according to reports, the Iranian authorities are increasingly filtering internet sites and blocking access to several dozen online publications and political, social and cultural weblogs; whereas, by preventing free use of the internet, the Iranian authorities are cracking down on the Iranian public's only means of access to uncensored information,

Women's rights

M. **whereas Iran is still not a party to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,**

N. **whereas demonstrations for legal reforms to end discrimination against women have been broken up and participants have been arrested, although later released again,**

Violation of other rights

O. whereas in September 2006 President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad openly called for a purge of liberal and secular academics in the universities, whereas **the Iranian Government is increasingly barring university students from pursuing their higher education despite the fact that they have passed competitive entrance exams, and whereas the judiciary has prosecuted numerous students and sentenced them to imprisonment, fines or flogging during the past year,**

P. whereas **people are still imprisoned and at times executed for sexual offences, inter alia for adult consensual sexual activity between unmarried persons and homosexuals,**

Q. whereas in 2005 Iran accounted for the second highest number of executions worldwide, 282 sentences of capital punishment being reported, of which 111 cases were executed between October 2005 and September 2006; highly concerned, moreover, that people are still being condemned to death by stoning despite the moratorium on stoning imposed in December 2002, and notably in this regard women for crimes of sexual misconduct,

R. **having regard to the announcement by the Head of the Judiciary of the Islamic Republic of Iran in April 2004 that torture would be banned and to the subsequent reform of legislation by the Iranian Parliament, approved by the Guardian Council in May 2004,**

S. whereas in December 2006 there will be elections to the Assembly of Experts, a pillar of the clerical establishment which chooses and supervises the work of the supreme leader, as well as Council elections; whereas for the Council elections it has been reported that in the electoral districts of Rey and Shemiranat

nominees have been refused registration and for the Assembly elections the reformists have threatened an election boycott if all nominees are not admitted,

T. deeply concerned at the failure to comply fully with international standards in the administration of justice, the absence of guarantees of due process of law and the absence of respect for internationally recognised legal safeguards,

Violation of international obligations

U. whereas Iran has not agreed to a further round of the EU-Iran Human Rights Dialogue that was established in 2002 and whereas, after the fourth round held on 14 to 15 June 2004, Iran ceased participation, despite repeated efforts by the EU over the last year and the current year to offer dates for a fifth round,

V. whereas EU relations with Iran have been based on a threefold approach, characterised by negotiations on a trade and cooperation agreement, political dialogue and a human rights dialogue, and whereas the political dialogue has been suspended because of the current Iranian position on its nuclear programme,

General situation

1. Expresses its **serious concern about the deterioration of the human rights situation in Iran since President Ahmadinejad took office in June 2005;**
2. Calls upon **Iran to grant all persons the right to exercise their civil rights and political freedoms and hopes that the Iranian authorities will fulfil their commitments to promote universal values, which Iran is also obliged to do by international conventions that it has ratified;**

Political prisoners

3. Calls on **the Iranian authorities to accelerate the process of investigation into the suspicious deaths and killings of intellectuals and political activists, to bring the alleged perpetrators to justice and to unconditionally provide adequate medical assistance to those prisoners who are in poor health;**
4. Calls on **the Iranian authorities to unconditionally release all prisoners of conscience, notably Keyvan Ansari, Keyvan Rafii, Kheirollah Derakhshandi, Abolfazl Jahandar and Koroush Zaim;**
5. Welcomes in this context the recent release of former Member of the Iranian Parliament Sayed Ali Akbar Mousavi-Kho'ini, as well as the earlier releases of Ramin Jahanbegloo and Akbar Ganji; **expects that Mr Ganji, who was invited to the European Parliament in October, will be able to return to Iran freely and without any obstacles;**

Prosecution of juvenile offenders

6. **Is appalled that there are still cases of executions of minors and sentences of stoning and that, despite government assurances, at least two sentences of stoning have been carried out;**
7. **Strongly condemns the death penalty as such, condemns in particular death sentences passed against and executions of juvenile offenders and minors, and calls upon the Iranian authorities to respect internationally recognised legal safeguards with regard to minors such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;**

Minority rights

8. Calls upon the authorities to respect internationally recognised legal safeguards with regard to persons belonging to religious minorities, officially recognised or otherwise; condemns the current lack of respect for minority rights and demands that minorities be allowed to exercise all rights granted by the Iranian Constitution and international law; further calls upon the authorities to eliminate all forms of discrimination based on religious or ethnic grounds or against persons belonging to minorities, such as Kurds, Azeris, Arabs and Baluchis;

9. Remains concerned about the fate of the lawyer Saleh Kamrani, who defended Azeri Turks in a law suit and disappeared on 14 June 2006; calls on the Iranian authorities to immediately halt the imminent execution of the Arabs Abdullah Suleymani, Abdulreza Sanawati Zergani, Qasem Salamat, Mohammad Jaab Pour, Abdulamir Farjallah Jaab, Alireza Asakreh, Majed Alboghbaish, Khalaf Derhab Khudayrawi, Malek Banitamim, Sa'id Saki and Abdullah Al-Mansouri;

Freedom of the press

10. Reminds the Government of Iran of its obligations, as a signatory to the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to safeguard fundamental human rights, notably the freedom of opinion, and calls for the release of all imprisoned journalists and webloggers, including Motjaba Saminejad, Ahmad Raza Shiri, Arash Sigarchi and Masoud Bastani;

11. Condemns the arrests and imprisonment of cyber-journalists and webloggers and the parallel censorship of several online publications, weblogs and internet sites, as these are the most uncensored source of news to the Iranian people; also condemns the wave of arbitrary arrests of journalists as well as the severe restriction and, in particular, the closure of media in Iran;

12. Calls on the Iranian Parliament to amend the Iranian Press Law and the Penal Code to bring them into line with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and notably to repeal all criminal provisions dealing with the peaceful expression of opinions, including in the press;

Freedom of religion

13. Calls on the Iranian authorities to eliminate all forms of discrimination based on religious grounds; notably calls for the de facto ban on practising the Baha'i faith to be lifted;

14. Expresses its concern about the arrest of the two lawyers Farshid Yadollahi and Omid Behrouzi, who received prison sentences while defending Sufis in Qom; expresses equally its concern for the safety of Ayatollah Sayad Hossein Kazemeyni Boroujerdi, who has been advocating for years the separation of religion from the political basis of the State and who has been rearrested, reportedly with more than 400 of his followers;

Women's rights

15. Expresses its concern about the continuous discrimination in law and in practice against women, despite some progress; condemns the use of violence and discrimination against women in Iran, which remains a serious problem; further condemns the use of violence by the Iranian security forces against women who had gathered earlier this year to celebrate International Women's Day on 8 March 2006; condemns furthermore the Iranian security forces' violent disruption of a peaceful demonstration on 12 June 2006 by women and men advocating an end to legal discrimination against women in Iran;

16. **Urges Iran to sign the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and moreover demands that the legal age of majority for women in Iran be changed to 18 years;**

Violation of other rights

17. **Strongly condemns the open call by President Ahmadinejad for a purge of liberal and secular academics in the universities and calls for all those expelled to be allowed to return and to teach according to the elementary rights of academic freedom;**

18. **Deeply deplores the deaths of student activist Akbar Mahdavi Mohammadi and political prisoner Valiollah Feyz as a result of their hunger strikes and calls for the release of Manoucher Mohammadi; requests that students should not be barred from higher education due to their peaceful political activities;**

19. **Demands that adult consensual sexual activity by unmarried persons should not lead to prosecution; further demands that people should not be imprisoned or executed on grounds of their sexual orientation;**

20. **Calls on the Iranian authorities to give evidence that they are implementing their declared moratorium on stoning, and demands the immediate and strict implementation of the ban on torture as announced, passed by the Iranian Parliament and approved by the Guardian Council; moreover demands that the Islamic Penal Code of Iran be reformed in order to abolish stoning;**

21. Is deeply concerned those for the upcoming elections nominees once again have not been able to register and that reformists will boycott the elections due to the undemocratic procedures for the listing of candidates for the elections;

22. Calls upon the Iranian authorities to make efforts to ensure the full application of due process of law and fair, transparent procedures by the judiciary, to ensure respect for the rights of the defence and the equity of verdicts in all types of court;

European initiatives

23. **Calls on Iran to recommence the EU-Iran Human Rights Dialogue with the European Union and, further, calls upon the Council and the Commission to closely monitor developments in Iran and also to raise concrete cases of human rights abuses as the basic condition for progress in EU-Iran economic and trade relations;**

24. **Calls on the Commission, in close cooperation with the European Parliament, to make effective use of the new Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights in order to ensure democracy and respect for human rights in Iran, for example by supporting uncensored media;**

25. **Calls on the Council to examine the way in which Parliament may become involved in the regular updating of Council Common Position 2001/931/CFSP of 27 December 2001 on the application of specific measures to combat terrorism, taking into account developments from 2001 onwards;**

26. **Welcomes the first visit by a Majlis delegation to the European Parliament in October and expresses its hope that these fruitful exchanges, as well as this resolution, will form part of a continuous dialogue which will lead to a gradual rapprochement between Iran and the European Union on the basis of shared values as enshrined in the UN Charter and Conventions;**

27. **Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative for CFSP, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of**

the United Nations, the UN Commission on Human Rights, the Head of the State Supreme Court of Iran and the Government and Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?Type=TA&Reference=P6-TA-2006-0503&language=EN>

Palestinian territories

► **European Parliament resolution on the situation in the Gaza Strip** (16/11/06)

The European Parliament,

– having regard to its previous resolutions on the Middle East, in particular those of 2 February 2006 on the result of the Palestinian elections and the situation in East Jerusalem(1) , 1 June 2006 on the humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian territories and the role of the EU(2) and 7 September 2006 on the situation in the Middle East(3) ,

– having regard to UN Security Council Resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973),

– having regard to the Quartet's "Roadmap for Peace" of 30 April 2003,

– having regard to the conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations Council of 15 September 2006, 16 and 17 October 2006 and 13 November 2006,

– having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the Israeli military operation in The Gaza Strip has resulted in over 350 deaths, including many civilians, since June 2006 and whereas the Israeli attack in Beit Hanun on 8 November 2006 resulted in the death of 19 Palestinians, mostly children and women,

B. extremely concerned about the fact that, as a result of the massive devastation of public facilities and private homes, the disruption of hospitals, clinics and schools, the denial of access to water, food and electricity, the destruction of agricultural lands and the total blockade on the Gaza Strip, the humanitarian crisis has reached a catastrophic level,

C. whereas attacks targeted directly at civilian assets and disproportionate or indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population represent a flagrant breach of fundamental rights as laid down by international law and the Geneva Conventions,

D. whereas Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert expressed his distress and voiced sorrow for what he said was the result of a "technical failure" at Beit Hanun on 8 November 2006 and the Israeli Army has decided to initiate an internal investigation,

E. whereas the right of a state to defend itself cannot justify any disproportionate or indiscriminate use of force, and international humanitarian law strictly prohibits attacks on civilians,

F. whereas the new cycle of violence is threatening the efforts made by the Palestinian National Authority to form a new Palestinian government of national unity,

G. whereas the international community and the European Union are providing considerable support for efforts to solve the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, with special regard to the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM); whereas, however, this assistance cannot meet all needs,

H. deeply concerned at the implications of the recent appointment of Avigdor Lieberman as Deputy Prime Minister of Israel,

I. whereas the Middle East peace process is in political and diplomatic deadlock, although a comprehensive and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is essential to the establishment of peace and security in the whole region,

J. whereas the European Union, as a member of the Quartet (which also comprises the United Nations, the United States of America and Russia), has a special responsibility for peace and security in the Middle East, which is in Europe's neighbourhood, and whereas the instruments and methods for the coordination of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) must therefore be improved, inter alia through the adoption of a common position in the framework of the CFSP on the basis of Articles 15 and 16 of the Treaty on European Union,

1. Expresses its deepest condolences and sympathy to the families of the victims of the recent bombing in Beit Hanun and to all other innocent casualties;

2. Expresses its deep indignation at the Israeli military operation carried out in Beit Hanun and in the Gaza Strip, and condemns the Israeli army's use of disproportionate action, which is undermining attempts to initiate the peace process:

3. Calls on the Israeli government to halt its military operations in the Gaza Strip immediately, and reaffirms that there is no military solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict;

4. Calls on the Palestinian militias to bring to an end the firing of rockets into Israeli territory, which is indiscriminate and deliberately targets civilians, to respect the truce and to refrain from further escalating the conflict; condemns the recent rocket attack in Sderot and the killing of innocent Israeli civilians;

5. Expresses its deep concern about the possible grave consequences of the current crisis, including further military and terrorist attacks, undermining the fragile political situation in the region as a whole;

6. Notes the blocking in the UN Security Council of a draft resolution on the situation in the Gaza Strip by a US veto, and regrets the lack of a strong and clear stance by the international community on the current crisis;

7. Calls on the US Government to reassess its role in the Quartet and in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with a view to supporting an end to the violence and a new and genuine dialogue between the parties;

8. Calls on the Council and the Member States to adopt a common position pursuant to Article 15 of the Treaty on European Union, in order to make an appropriate assessment of the current situation and to promote a serious attempt to halt the violence and bring the parties concerned to the negotiating table;

9. Invites the Quartet to act urgently for the resumption of negotiations with and between the parties concerned and for the full implementation of all parts of the Roadmap; declares once again, at this particular stage, that a solution to the Middle East conflict will only be possible through the negotiation of a firm and final peace agreement as set out in the Roadmap, without prior conditions, based on the existence of two democratic, sovereign and viable states, living peacefully side by side within secure and recognised international borders, and that the continuing loss of civilian lives is intolerable;

10. Reiterates its suggestion that the presence of a multinational force in Lebanon could be taken as an exemplary model to be followed in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, in order to protect the civilian population on both sides; invites the Council, in the meantime, to launch an initiative to dispatch international military observers to the Gaza Strip, and calls on all parties to endorse and fully cooperate with such a proposal;

11. Calls on the Council urgently to convene the EU-Israel Association Council in order to express the position of the European Union after the Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip, with regard, in particular, to full compliance with Article 2 of the EU-Israel Association Agreement(4) ;

12. Calls on the Council to address itself, within the framework of the EU-Palestinian Interim Association Agreement(5) , to the new Palestinian government of national unity in order to confront the issue of violence and security;

13. Stresses that human rights must be fully respected and that the violation of international humanitarian law must be halted immediately in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank;

14. Supports the EU Presidency's statement urging the Israeli government to cease all provocative activities in the Palestinian territories, including building settlements, constructing the separation wall, conducting indiscriminate military operations and demolishing Palestinian homes;

15. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to supply extra medical aid to Palestinian hospitals, in particular in the Gaza Strip;

16. Welcomes the agreement reached by the President of the Palestinian Authority to promote a national dialogue between the Palestinian political parties and the appointment of a new Palestinian Prime Minister to form a new Palestinian government, which should act as a negotiating partner for the international community; considers that this could lead to the restoration of economic aid to the Palestinian Authority;

17. Calls on the Council and the Commission to continue to guarantee, together with the international community, essential humanitarian aid for the Palestinian population; demands that the TIM be reinforced and extended in terms of duration and resources; calls on the Israeli government urgently to resume the transfer of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues;

18. Calls on Israel to lift its economic blockade of the Gaza Strip, to facilitate trade between the Palestinian territories, Israel and the world as a whole, to promote economic development in the Gaza Strip for the benefit of both Palestinians and Israelis, and to permit the movement of people at Rafah, in compliance with the Agreement on Movement and Access and the EU Border Assistance Mission, as well as at Karni and at other border crossings in the Gaza Strip; calls on the EU to face its full responsibility on the implementation of this agreement;

19. Reiterates its call for the immediate release of the Palestinian ministers and legislators in Israeli custody and of the abducted Israeli soldier;

20. Calls on the Council to make every effort to convene an international peace conference – along the lines of the 1991 Madrid Conference – in order to find a comprehensive, lasting and viable solution to the problems in the area, based on the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and considers that a unilateral approach by any of the parties concerned must be rejected;

21. Considers the involvement of the League of Arab States to be essential in this context; considers the League's 2002 "Beirut Plan", as well as the 2003 Geneva Initiative, to be important contributions to the negotiations, which should be duly taken into account;

22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative for the CFSP, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Secretary-General, the President of the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian Legislative Council, the Israeli Government and Knesset, the governments and parliaments of the United States and the Russian Federation, and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?Type=TA&Reference=P6-TA-2006-0492&language=EN>

THEMATIC :

FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVES

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

EXTERNAL RELATIONS & DEVELOPMENT-RELATED ISSUES

EU / UN REFORM

MISCELLANEOUS

EU Council

- ▶ **Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the entry into force of the Convention of Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War** (16/11/06)

The European Union welcomes the entry into force on 12 November 2006 of Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War, annexed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

In conflict areas, people continue to be killed or injured by unexploded and abandoned explosive ordnance even after the end of hostilities. The Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War addresses the post-conflict humanitarian threat generated by conventional munitions, including cluster munitions, that do not explode as intended or that are abandoned. The Protocol's requirements include the marking, clearance, removal, and destruction of such remnants of war by the party in control of the territory in which the munitions are located. The Protocol is a multilaterally negotiated instrument of international humanitarian law and relevant for arms control. The European Union calls upon all States to become parties to the Convention and its Protocols, which strengthen international humanitarian law and help to protect civilians against the effects of hostilities.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_applications/applications/newsroom/loadDocument.ASP?cmsID=363&LANG=EN&directory=en/cfsp/&fileName=91655.pdf