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27 June 2006

The situation of human rights defenders in Council of Europe member states

Motion for a resolution
presented by Mr Txueka and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

The Assembly takes note of the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights and of the Declaration on Human Rights defenders, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 9, 1998, which guarantee the respect of freedom of association.

The Assembly forcefully reaffirms that human rights defenders, individually or in association with others, play a primary role in the establishment and the strengthening of the rule of law, democracy and the protection of human rights, as well as in the prevention of conflicts.

The Assembly also notes that human rights defenders play an essential role with intergovernmental organisations, in particular the Council of Europe.

Alas, in some Member States of the Council of Europe, human rights defenders, which often constitute the last bastion against the increase of arbitrariness, have become the target of multifaceted repression: arbitrary arrests and detentions, intimidations, threats, physical attacks, harassment....

The number of restrictive laws, which tend to progressively neutralise civil society, and which are often accompanied by defamation campaigns, aimed at discrediting NGOs in the eyes of the people, keeps increasing.

Thus, the Assembly notices with deep concern that human rights defenders are confronted with a difficult environment on a daily basis. The exercise of their freedoms of association, expression and peaceful assembly come up against many hindrances, in violation of commitments made by the States, under the Statute of the Council of Europe and the European Convention on Human Rights.

For all these reasons, the Assembly considers the establishment of a protection mechanism for human rights defenders as necessary, in order to protect them against any violations of their rights and freedoms, and to ensure the good functioning of a pluralist democracy in the Member States. This mechanism will have to be endowed with the means necessary for its action, and will work closely together with the Commissioner for Human Rights.

Signed (see overleaf)

*Signed*¹:

TXUEKA, Iñaki, Spain, ALDE
BANAC, Ivo, Croatia, ALDE
BERDZENISHVILI, Levan, Georgia, ALDE
BĒRZINŠ, Andris, Latvia, ALDE
BOUSAKLA, Mimount, Belgium, SOC
BREEN, Patrick, Ireland, EPP/CD
DORIĆ, Miljenko, Croatia, ALDE
EINARSSON, Mats, Sweden, UEL
FENECHIU, Relu, Romania, ALDE
GLĂVAN, Stefan, Romania, ALDE
HANCOCK, Michael, United Kingdom, ALDE
IVANOV, Sergei, Estonia, ALDE
JAKAVONIS, Gediminas, Lithuania, ALDE
KAIKKONEN, Antti, Finland, ALDE
KOX, Tiny, Netherlands, UEL
LAUKKANEN, Markku, Finland, ALDE
LLOYD, Tony, United Kingdom, SOC
LUND, Rune, Denmark, UEL
NAGHDALYAN, Hermine, Armenia, ALDE
ØSTERGAARD, Morten, Denmark, ALDE
RANDEGGER, Johannes, Switzerland, ALDE
RUSTAMYAN, Armen, Armenia, SOC
ŠILEIKIS, Gintaras, Lithuania, ALDE
STANTCHEVA, Darinka, Bulgaria, ALDE
TEVDORADZE, Elene, Georgia, ALDE
TIILIKAINEN, Kimmo, Finland, ALDE

¹ SOC: Socialist Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democratic Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: not registered in a group