

# Press release – Human rights breaches in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Bahrain and Cambodia



## **The situation in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the assassination of the Italian ambassador Luca Attanasio and two of his staff**

The European Parliament condemns in the strongest terms the killing of Italian Ambassador to the DRC Luca Attanasio, his driver Mustapha Milambo, and Vittorio Iacovacci, an Italian military police officer, during an attack on their convoy in the eastern part of the country on 22 February.

Gunmen ambushed the ambassador and his staff whilst they were travelling in a UN vehicle from Goma to visit a UN World Food Programme (WFP) school project in Rutshuru.

MEPs call for a thorough, independent and transparent investigation into the circumstances surrounding the murders. They welcome the DRC President Félix Tshisekedi's commitment to launch an inquiry and call for full cooperation with the Italian authorities and the United Nations.

Persistent and serious human rights abuses and international humanitarian law violations against civilians in the eastern DRC are of serious concern, MEPs say. These include summary executions, sexual and gender-based violence, and the large-scale recruitment and use of children by armed groups, as well as the killing of civilians by members of the DRC security forces.

For all the details, the resolution will be available in full [here](#) (11.03.2021). It was adopted by 669 votes in favour, 4 against with 17 abstentions.

**The human rights situation in the Kingdom of Bahrain, in particular the cases**

## **of death row inmates and human rights defenders**

MEPs are deeply concerned that ten years after the Bahraini 'Arab Spring' uprising, in 2011, the human rights situation in the country continues to worsen. Arbitrary arrests continue, the death penalty is still being applied, human rights defenders are prosecuted and harassed, and civil and political rights and freedoms of association, assembly, and expression continue to be denied.

The resolution strongly condemns the sentencing to death of Mohammed Ramadan and Husain Ali Moosa, and urges the Bahraini authorities, and in particular His Majesty Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, to halt their execution immediately. Their sentences must also be commuted and there must be a retrial that fully complies with international fair trial standards and excludes evidence obtained under torture, MEPs say.

The European Parliament further strongly deplores the lifting of the de facto moratorium on the use of the death penalty in Bahrain and calls on the authorities to introduce immediately a new moratorium on the use of capital punishment as a step towards its abolition. MEPs also demand that all human rights defenders and prisoners of conscience in the country be immediately and unconditionally released.

The Bahraini government must stop harassing human rights defenders and immediately lift the travel ban on them, MEPs stress. The country's authorities must also guarantee that human rights defenders are able to carry out their legitimate activities under all circumstances.

For a complete overview, the resolution will be available in full [here](#) (11.03.2021). It was adopted by 633 votes in favour, 11 against with 45 abstentions.

## **The mass trials against the opposition and civil society in Cambodia**

Parliament calls on the Cambodian government to stop harassing, intimidating and charging members of the political opposition, trade unionists, human rights defenders, the media and civil society actors with crimes for politically motivated reasons. It also urges the country's security forces to refrain from unnecessary and excessive force against those engaged in peaceful protests.

The resolution demands that the Cambodian authorities release, without delay, all persons who have been detained for exercising their human rights, and demands that all charges against these people be dropped. The authorities must also immediately and unconditionally annul the sentences against prominent members of the opposition, such as Sam Rainsy, and all those arbitrarily sentenced alongside him.

MEPs are appalled by the escalating violations of human rights in Cambodia, including violence against peaceful protesters, the adoption of new repressive laws and the arrest of human rights defenders, journalists, opposition party activists, environmentalists, students and ordinary citizens

for peacefully expressing their opinions.

They also state that targeted EU sanctions, including travel bans and asset freezes, against Cambodian leaders and their economic interests are overdue, and urge the Council to adopt restrictive measures against the political leaders and leaders of the security forces responsible for serious human rights violations under the EU global human rights sanctions regime.

For all the details, the resolution will be available in full [here](#) (11.03.2021). It was adopted by 610 votes in favour, 43 against with 37 abstentions.