



Plenary sitting

B9-0353/2022

5.7.2022

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province (2022/2753(RSP))

Engin Eroglu, Atidzhe Alieva-Veli, Petras Auštrevičius, Malik Azmani, Nicola Beer, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Dita Charanzová, Olivier Chastel, Klemen Grošelj, Bernard Guetta, Svenja Hahn, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Nathalie Loiseau, Karen Melchior, Urmas Paet, Dragoș Pîslaru, Frédérique Ries, Michal Šimečka, Nicolae Ștefănuță, Dragoș Tudorache, Hilde Vautmans
on behalf of the Renew Group

B9-0353/2022

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province
(2022/2753(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolution on Tajikistan,
- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Tajikistan, of the other part of 29 December 2009,
- having regard to the European Parliament's report on implementation and review of the EU-Central Asia Strategy of 8 March 2016;
- having regard to the previous reports and statements of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Tajikistan,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 17 June 2019 on the EU Strategy for Central Asia,
- having regard to the joint statement of 18 May 2022 of the Delegation of the European Union to Tajikistan and the Embassies of France, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America joint statement on Developments in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous region,
- having regard to the call for restraint of 19 May 2022 by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres amid reports of increased tension and violence in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast of Tajikistan,
- having regard to the UN Human Rights Council outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Tajikistan of 23 March 2022,

- having regard to the last EU-Tajikistan annual Human Rights Dialogues,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, guaranteeing freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, the right of individuals to respect for their personal, private and family life and the right of equality, and banning discrimination in the enjoyment of those rights,
 - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas peaceful protesters in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region in Eastern Tajikistan have been targeted with forceful and repressive measures by the Tajik government for months;
- B. whereas on 25 November 2021, a group of law enforcement agents tortured and killed a civilian, Gulbiddin Ziyobekov, whom they accused of attacking a deputy prosecutor; whereas following his death, civilian peaceful protests erupted, demanding an investigation into the circumstances of the killing; whereas as a result, the police shot into a crowd, some protesters were killed, others were injured;
- C. whereas media outlets have been forced into censoring news about events taking place in GBAO being under threat of closure;
- D. whereas authorities cut off mobile communications and the Internet as a reaction to the protests, leaving residents of Gorno-Badakhshan with no Internet for 4 months;
- E. whereas from November 2021 until May 2022, the government and protest leaders tried to negotiate a resolution to the conflict;
- F. whereas since 16 May 2022, the protests started again as a reaction to the lack of investigation into the killing of November 2021; whereas special forces violently dispersed the protesters, resulting in the killing and the detention of protesters; whereas the Tajik authorities cut off the access to the internet in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region again; whereas the police continued attacks on

civilians, using tear gas grenades and live ammunition for days;

- G. whereas on 18 May 2022, the Ministry of Interior of Tajikistan announced the start of an “anti-terrorist” operation in Gorno-Badakhshan;
 - H. whereas on 12 June 2022 two prominent informal leaders in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region were killed;
 - I. whereas journalists, bloggers, lawyers and human rights advocates were severely targeted and faced violence, threats, criminalisation, arbitrary detention and trumped up charges;
 - J. whereas human rights organisations have accused Tajik authorities of violating basic human rights in Khorugh and Vamar, where cases of torture of detainees, kidnapping, looting, and the extrajudicial execution of civilians have been reported;
 - K. whereas the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region is the poorest region in Tajikistan, with the highest unemployment rate; whereas the region suffers from the unequal distribution of income from the exploitation of precious stone mines which is the main natural resource of the province; whereas these resources are exploited by Chinese companies in agreement with the Tajik authorities; whereas the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region is severely economically hit by Russia’s unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine and subsequent economic sanctions;
1. Strongly condemns the crackdown against civilians, journalists, lawyers and activists in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region for expressing their opinion and protesting peacefully; deplors that it jeopardizes any efforts to negotiate the resolution of the conflict between Dushanbe and the Province;
 2. Calls on the Tajik government to immediately put an end to the repressive measures against the peaceful protesters in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region; Calls on the security forces to refrain from using unnecessary and excessive force against those engaged in peaceful protests; Calls on the Tajik authorities to put an end to judicial intimidation and harassment against journalists, bloggers, lawyers and human rights advocates and calls for their immediate release;
 3. Calls on the Tajik authorities to investigate the circumstances of the killing of Gulbiddin Ziyobekov that occurred on 25 November 2021, as peacefully demanded by the protesters;

4. Is highly concerned about the increasing detention and arrest of human rights lawyers, protest leaders, the restrictions on media freedom and Internet and mobile communications;
5. Urges the authorities of Tajikistan to give defence attorneys and protests figures fair, open and transparent trials, to provide substantive protections and procedural guarantees in accordance with Tajikistan's international obligations and to authorise the reinvestigation by international organisations of all reported violations of human rights and dignity; calls for all those imprisoned or detained to be granted access to independent legal services, together with the right to meet their family members regularly; recalls that, for every sentence issued, clear evidence must be presented to justify the criminal charges brought against the defendant;
6. Calls on the Tajik Government to allow protesters to operate freely and to exercise the freedoms of assembly, association and expression, in accordance with international human rights norms and the constitution of Tajikistan;
7. Calls on the Tajik government to immediately restore communications to the region to ensure that citizens are able to access information.
8. Emphasises that the legitimate fight against terrorism and violent extremism should not be used as a pretext to suppress opposition activity, hinder freedom of expression or hamper the independence of the judiciary; recalls that the fundamental freedoms of all Tajik citizens must be guaranteed, and the rule of law;
9. Welcomes the joint statement of 18 May 2022 issued by the delegation of the European Union to Tajikistan and the Embassies of France, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America on Developments in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous region; Calls for the UN, the EU, and in particular the European External Action Service, to monitor closely the implementation of the rule of law in Tajikistan, especially the freedoms of assembly, association and expression, even in security-related crisis situations; calls on the EU Delegation in Dushanbe to continue to play an active role in resolving this conflict;
10. Encourages the Commission to adopt targeted sanctions and urges the Council to

adopt restrictive measures, including withdrawing part of the tariff preferences granted to Tajikistan under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP);

11. Calls on the authorities of Tajikistan to ensure proper follow-up to, and implementation of, the Universal Periodic Review recommendations;
12. Stresses the importance of relations between the EU and Tajikistan; highlights the EU's interest in a sustainable relationship with Tajikistan in terms of political and economic cooperation; stresses that political and economic relations with the EU are deeply linked to the sharing of values relating to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as envisaged in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement;
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the European External Action Service, the Council, the Commission, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the EU Special Representative for Central Asia, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the UN Human Rights Council, the Government of Tajikistan and the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon.