

Human rights breaches in Guatemala, Azerbaijan and Bangladesh

European Parliament adopts a resolution

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USPA NEWS - The European Parliament call on all Guatemalan political parties, branches of Government and institutions to respect the integrity of the electoral process and the electoral outcome clearly expressed by Guatemalan citizens in 2023 elections. Congratulating Bernardo Arévalo and Karin Herrera from Movimiento Semilla on their election as President and Vice President, MEPs call on all state institutions and sectors of society to support an orderly transition and transfer of power.

The resolution points to continuous attempts to suspend the Movimiento Semilla and condemns any action, especially from the Ministerio Publico, to overturn the outcome of the elections. It deplores continued efforts to criminalise independent judicial operators, and the instrumentalisation of judicial and prosecutorial institutions the aim of which is to undermine the rule of law. Concerned about the arbitrary detention of prosecutors, judges, independent journalists, and human rights defenders, MEPS demand the immediate and unconditional release of all those detained.

Call for the release of political prisoners in Azerbaijan

About Azerbaijan, MEPs demand the "immediate and unconditional release" of Dr Gubad Ibodoghlu, a prominent opposition figure, who was detained on July 23, 2023. They underline that the charges brought against him are politically motivated. They call on the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Josep Borrell, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and member states to "condemn the serious human rights violations and breaches of democracy in Azerbaijan, and to raise cases such as Gubad Ibodoghlu's in all bilateral meetings as well as in the negotiations of a future partnership agreement.

The signing of such agreement should be conditional on the release of all political prisoners, MEPs add. The Parliament also calls for EU sanctions under the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime on Azerbaijani officials who have committed serious human rights violations.

Dr Ibodoghlu serves as Chairman of the Azerbaijan Democracy and Prosperity Movement that has been repeatedly prevented from registering as a political party. He remains in prison, faces a sentence of up to 12 years, and has reportedly been subject to inhumane treatment and suffers from serious health conditions.

Human rights situation in Bangladesh

Expressing their deep concern at the deteriorating human rights situation in Bangladesh, MEPs call on the Government to restore a safe and enabling environment for NGOs, human rights defenders, activists and religious minorities. Bangladesh must uphold the country's international commitments, particularly under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Authorities must also ensure, MEPs say, that civil society organisations can access foreign grants.

MEPs specifically deplore the prison sentence against two Odhikar leaders - Adilur Rahman Khan and ASM Nasiruddin Elan - handed down on September 14, and urge the Government of Bangladesh to immediately and unconditionally quash the ruling. An Everything but Arms (EBA) enhanced engagement process remains ongoing with Bangladesh owing to its serious violations of international conventions, MEPs recall, denouncing the Odhikar case as a regrettable backwards step, putting into question whether EBA preferences should continue to apply to Bangladesh.

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