

Extracts from the debates on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law: - Laos, the case of Sombath Somphone - Detention of human rights activists in Zimbabwe - Recent attacks on medical aid workers in Pakistan Ref90197 // European Parliament , Strasbourg, EP Plenary session -

Type: [News](#) Reference: [90197](#) Duration: [00:04:58](#) Lieu: [European Parliament , Strasbourg](#)
End production: [07/02/2013](#) First transmission: [07/02/2013](#)

MEPs held urgent debates this afternoon on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Sombath Somphone is a prominent figure in social development and youth education in Laos, and he disappeared on 15 December. In Zimbabwe there is being an increase in intimidation, arbitrary arrests, judicial harassment and disappearances of human rights activists and political opponents of Robert Mugabe's Zanu-PF. The MEPs also debated the necessity to ensure the safety of health workers that go to Pakistan due to the several deadly attacks they have been suffering during the last months.



Only the original language version is authentic and it prevails in the event of its differing from the translated versions.

TIME	DESCRIPTION	DURATION
00:00:00	Title	00:00:05
00:00:05	Exterior view of the European Parliament, Strasbourg	00:00:05
00:00:10	SOUNDBITE (Spanish) Raül ROMEVA I RUEDA (Greens/EFA, SP) "Many of us are deeply concerned about the whereabouts and the safety of Sombath Somphone. The length and the lack of transparency of the investigation is also a major problem, thus we urge the Laos authorities to inform Sombath Somphone's family about the progress of the investigation and call on the government to ensure that all steps are taken to locate recue and return him safely to his family as soon as possible."	00:00:26
00:00:36	SOUNDBITE (Lithuanian) Laima Liucija ANDRIKIENĖ (EPP, LT) "We call on Laos authorities to undertake prompt , transparent, and thorough investigation in accordance with their obligations under international human rights law and of course we call on the EU High Representative to closely monitor the case, finally we recommend that the authorities of Laos should make enforced disappearance a criminal offence."	00:00:22

00:00:58	SOUNDBITE (English) Phil BENNION (ALDE, UK) "It is absolutely crucial that the Laos authorities take all the necessary steps to end the practise of arbitrary arrests and secret detention. it is also urgent that they make enforced disappearance a full criminal offence ."	00:00:15
00:01:13	SOUNDBITE (English) Connie HEDEGAARD, European Commission " With every day passing our concern grows. String international mobilisation for Mr Somphone is crucial including at the UN level. So we call on the Laos authorities to involve the family of Mr Somphone in the proceedings and to accelerate the investigation. We salute and join this Parliament resolution in favour of Somphone and a strong message of support and call for safe return to his family	00:00:30
00:01:43	SOUNDBITE (English) Phil BENNION (ALDE, UK), "We can also use the tools that are at our disposal. For instance, in the case of an EU development cooperation this is being currently suspended so this is the kind of pressure that we can and are using. We also use strong human rights clauses in trade agreements. And I have to say that I deplore the fact that our partnership agreement with Zimbabwe is still lacking such a strong clause and I suggest that we try the next opportunity to put that right."	00:00:31
00:02:14	SOUNDBITE (French) Marie-Christine VERGIAT (GUE, FR) "The politics of reclaiming land for the indigenous population along with racism targeting the white population has marked the country's history but Zimbabweans are the real victim of this and what is has really down is just fill the pockets of Mr Mugabe's friends it has not help the local people. The repression part of the police and the military is rising as we are getting close to the elections. Human rights defenders are the first victims and this is not new. Last January we voted a resolution on EU economic partnership agreement in this region due to the situation in Zimbabwe, and I found this resolution quite weak if I may say so."	00:00:45
00:02:59	SOUNDBITE (English) Connie HEDEGAARD, European Commission "The EU is also coordinating closely with international and as was mentioned regional key partners to strengthen civil society and improve the political space in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe civil society is competent and as far as group of human rights defenders and democracy advocacy are concerned it is remarkably coercive so Mr President I believe that then EU has an important role to play in supporting a peaceful and democratic future Zimbabwe ."	00:00:34

00:03:33	SOUNDBITE (Portuguese) Rui TAVARES, (Greens/EFA, PT), "regrettably the majority of those who are victims of attacks are women, very brave women. They dedicate their lives to promoting the health of children in their own country. 24000 mosks condemned the attacks and I quote nor the tradition, nor Islam justify these actions; these women did nothing wrong, there are martyrs of Islam because they were serving humanity and Muslims. There is no reason at all for criticizing the polio eradication campaign, so this clearly show that religion can not be used nor excuse these criminal attacks.	00:00:45
00:04:18	SOUNDBITE (English) by Charles TANNOCK, (ECR,UK)," Pakistan is one of the very few countries in which polio remains endemic; If children in Europe no longer need to endure this dreadful illness , Pakistani children should not endure that either; We must therefore do all we can in the EU to assist Pakistan civil society in these worthy aims and to prevent the Taliban claiming anymore lives in their pursuit of a toxic doctrine."	00:00:22
00:04:40	Cutaways of MEPs in the Chamber (7 shots)	00:00:18
00:04:58	End	00:00:00