

European Communities

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1982-1983

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DOCUMENT 1-108/82

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled by Mr VAN MIERT

pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

on the abduction of Serge BERTEN in Guatemala

The European Parliament,

- considering that a large number of development aid workers and missionaries from the EEC are working selflessly and with great conviction and commitment in Guatemala to improve the lot and alleviate the misery of poorest people in particular,
 - noting that many of them are the object of constant criticism, harassment and violence on the part of the Guatemalan authorities and right-wing or extreme right-wing groups,
 - considering that not a single one of them can be charged with more than a deep social compassion and unlimited dedication for the people who have put their trust and hope in them,
 - expressing its horror at the fact that several of these development aid workers have in the past been brutally murdered by agents of the authorities or extreme right-wing commando groups,
 - indignant at the abduction of the Flemish 'Scheut' missionary Serge BERTEN by an extreme right-wing group on 20 January 1982,
 - fully comprehending the anxiety of Serge BERTEN's relations who have had no news of their son/brother since his brutal abduction,
 - considering that no steps have yet been taken to institute a thorough investigation despite the cooperation promised by the Guatemalan authorities,
 - considering that the initiative undertaken by the Belgian Government has so far been completely unproductive,
1. Urgently requests the Foreign Ministers meeting in political cooperation to approach the new Guatemalan Government:
 - to protest against the continual harassment, terrorisation and abduction of the people, development aid workers and missionaries by right-wing and extreme right-wing groups,
 - to press for the opening of a thorough investigation into the abduction of Serge BERTEN in particular and into all similar cases from the past which have remained obscure,
 - to press for every effort to be made to ensure that such atrocities are not repeated in the future;
 2. Asks the Commission and the Governments of the Member States only to grant such aid as is directed towards the alleviation of the needs of the Guatemalan people until there has been a definite improvement as regards the respecting of human rights;
 3. Asks its President to forward this resolution to the Governments of the Member States, the Foreign Ministers meeting in political cooperation, the Commission, the Council and the Government of Guatemala.