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No EU cash for dictator

Press release by SNP MEP Ian Hudghton

SNP MEP and Party President **Ian Hudghton** has welcomed a vote by the European Parliament's Fisheries Committee to hold up the payment of more than £400,000 a year to the military dictatorship in Guinea.

The Fisheries Committee had been due to approve the payment this week as part of the EU Guinea Partnership agreement where the EU makes a financial contribution in exchange for access to Guinean waters for EU fishing boats.

But several MEPs including Mr Hudghton questioned the wisdom of approving such payments when the Guinean regime stands accused of serious human rights abuses. This comes after troops opened fire on pro-democracy demonstrators in the capital Conakry this week.

The Fisheries Committee declined to approve the EU Guinea Partnership Agreement by eleven votes to nine.

Mr Hudghton also criticised the decision of Conservative MEPs to support immediate payment to a military dictatorship implicated in human rights abuses. Speaking from Brussels after the vote, the SNP MEP said:

"I'm pleased that MEPs stood up to pressure from the European Commission and blocked this payment.

"It would have been absolutely wrong to be sending tax payers' money to a dictatorship in the same week that troops were opening fire on protestors. This violence is totally unacceptable and the EU needs to put pressure on the Guinean regime to respect human rights and the rule of law.

"I'm astounded that the Conservatives wanted to send money to a military dictator whose troops were this week shooting civilian protestors. I wonder what David Cameron's got to say about that?"

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Ian Hudghton

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