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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

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

pursuant to Rule 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on on Iraq, in particular death penalty (notably the case of Tariq Aziz) and attacks against Christian communities

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on behalf of the EFD Group

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European Parliament resolution on on Iraq, in particular death penalty (notably the case of Tariq Aziz) and attacks against Christian communities

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Iraq,
- having regard to its resolution of 21 January 2010 on recent attacks on Christian communities,
- having regard to the statement by the HR/VP Catherine Ashton of 3 November 2010 on the recent bomb attacks in Iraq,
- having regard to Rule 122 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas on 10 November 2010 a series of bomb and mortar attacks targeting Christian areas has killed at least five people in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad; whereas, these attacks came days after Islamist militants seized a Catholic cathedral taking more than 100 hostages and killing over 40 people; whereas on 15 November 2010 an Iraqi Christian and his 6 year old daughter were killed in a bombing in the northern city of Mosul;

B. whereas sectarian violence in Iraq remains intense, as shown by a report published last April by Amnesty International (AI) claiming that more than 100 people were killed between mid-July and mid-September 2009 in attacks targeting Christians, Sabeen-Mandaeans, Yazidis, Turkoman Shias, Shabaks and Kaka'is;

C. whereas, according to the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, around 900.000 of the 1.4 million Christians who lived in Iraq before the conflict, have fled the country;

D. whereas Article 10 of the Iraqi Constitution establishes the Government's commitment to assuring and maintaining the sanctity of holy shrines and religious sites; whereas Article 43 states that followers of all religious groups shall be free to practice their religious rites and manage their religious institutions;

E. whereas, Tariq Aziz, 74, former Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq under Saddam Hussain, was sentenced to death on 26 October by the Supreme Iraqi Criminal Tribunal (SICT), together with Sadoun Shakir, a former Interior Minister, and Abed Hamoud, formerly Saddam Hussain's private secretary;

F. whereas the death penalty was suspended for a time after the US-led military operation in Iraq but restored in August 2004: since then, hundreds of people have been sentenced to death and many have been executed;

G. whereas the years of the Ba'ath regime and decades of war have left behind a society

traumatised by war, repression, ethnic cleansing (including by chemical attack, as in Halabja) and international indifference to these crimes; whereas the international community have a duty and also a security interest, to improve the human rights situation for the people of Iraq and support efforts to establish a functioning democracy in the country;

1. Stresses that the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is a fundamental human right guaranteed by international legal instruments, and strongly condemns all kinds of violence, discrimination and intolerance against Christian communities in Iraq;
2. Remains concerned by the climate of impunity surrounding attacks against Christians and other minorities in Iraq;
3. Expresses the need for legislation implementing minority rights in the country to address the ongoing climate of impunity that exists in relation to attacks on Christians;
4. Calls on Iraqi authorities to bring perpetrators of sectarian violence to justice in accordance to the principles of the rule of law and international standards;
5. Calls on the Commission to channel EU support for democratic governance towards improving the condition of Iraqi minorities;
6. Notes that the recent acts of sectarian violence in Iraq are symptomatic of a global trend of violence against Christian communities; calls on the European Commission and the HR/VP to establish a permanent monitoring system, to assess the situation of religious freedom and persecution around the world;
7. Regrets the death sentence for former Iraqi Premier Tareq Aziz, as a setback for Iraq in its path towards the establishment of a legal system based on the rule of law in adherence to international standards; calls on the Iraqi government to establish a moratorium on all capital punishments in accordance to UNGA resolution of 18 December 2007;
8. Instructs its President to forward this recommendation to the Council, the Commission, the HR/VP and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Government and the Council of Representatives of the Republic of Iraq.