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Plenary sitting

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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 123(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Egypt
(2014/3017(RSP))

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on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Egypt
(2014/3017(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Egypt, in particular those of 16 February 2012 on ‘Egypt: recent developments’¹, 15 March 2012 on human trafficking in Sinai, in particular the case of Solomon W.², 14 March 2013 on the situation in Egypt³, 4 July 2013 on the crisis in Egypt⁴, 12 September 2013 on the situation in Egypt⁵, 6 February 2014 on the situation in Egypt⁶ and 17 July 2014 on freedom of expression and assembly in Egypt⁷,
 - having regard to the statements by the EEAS spokesperson of 21 September 2014 on the bombing at the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of 3 December 2014 on the court rulings in Egypt,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on Egypt,
 - having regard to the statements made by the spokesperson of the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Egypt and to the statement by the Group 8 UN experts on the mass death verdict in Egypt,
 - having regard to the internal report of 9 January 2014 entitled ‘Egypt, Constitutional Referendum January 2014’ and to the preliminary statement of 29 May 2014 entitled ‘Presidential election administered in line with the law, in an environment falling short of constitutional principles’ by the European Union Election Expert Mission (EU EEM),
 - having regard to the EU-Egypt Association Agreement of 2001,
 - having regard to the 300 recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review on Egypt at the UN Human Rights Council meeting of 7 November 2014,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas since the military takeover Egypt has enacted authoritarian laws by decree and without the involvement of parliament, which for example ban protests, expand the jurisdiction of military courts, remove several limits on pre-trial detention and restrict media coverage of the armed forces without prior approval; whereas on 9 January 2014 four protesters were killed by security forces during anti-government protesters;

¹ OJ C 249 E, 30.8.2013, p. 60.

² OJ C 251, 31.8.2013, p. 106.

³ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0095.

⁴ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0333.

⁵ Texts adopted, P7_(2013)0379.

⁶ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0100.

⁷ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2014)0007.

- B. whereas on 2 December 2014 an Egyptian criminal court handed down provisional death sentences against 188 defendants in the governorate of Giza; whereas prior to this case a judge in the governorate of Minya imposed 1 212 death sentences in March and April after two trials;
- C. whereas, according to both domestic and international human rights organisations, arrests, the excessive use of force, arbitrary detention and extension of the period of pre-trial detention have occurred in Egypt on an almost daily basis in recent months;
- D. whereas the Egyptian authorities have referred hundreds of civilians to military courts on the basis of an October 2014 decree by President Al-Sisi; whereas at least 820 civilians have been referred to military prosecutors; whereas civil prosecutors are using this decree retroactively, referring cases of civilians to military jurisdictions;
- E. whereas, since the military coup d'état against elected President Morsi in July 2013, Egyptian security forces have repeatedly used excessive and arbitrary force to disperse demonstrations, killing at least 1 400 protesters; whereas at least 817 died in the violent dismantling of the Rab'a al-Adawiya sit-in; whereas not a single police or army officer has been held accountable for these killings or other serious abuses over the last year; whereas according to official figures security forces have also detained at least 22 000 people; whereas others estimate that number at 41 000; whereas about 29 000 people may have been arrested for suspected ties with the Muslim Brotherhood;
- F. whereas 19-year old Irish citizen Ibrahim Halawa has been detained in an Egyptian jail in preventive detention without trial since August 2013;
- G. whereas the Egyptian police has arrested hundreds of people for violating the November 2013 law, which criminalises gatherings of ten or more people that authorities have not approved in advance; whereas this law allows the Interior Ministry to ban demonstrations at will and forcefully disperse those which are not authorised;
- H. whereas on 21 April 2015 an Egyptian court is due to deliver its verdict in the trial of ousted president Morsi and 14 others, charged with inciting the killing of protesters; whereas Morsi is also facing two other trials over charges of espionage and escaping from prison;
- I. whereas on 8 January 2015 the Egyptian prosecutor accepted an appeal in the trial of Mubarak after charges against him of killing protestors were dropped in a November court ruling;
- J. whereas on 11 January 2015 the Egyptian authorities released Khaled al-Qazzaz, one of the advisers to ousted President Morsi who were detained with him on 3 July 2013; whereas he had been held without charges since then;
- K. whereas on 7 January 2015 Al-Sisi was the first Egyptian President to attend the Christmas Eve Mass in a Coptic Church in Cairo; whereas he has recently called the Islamic leaders in his country to take a stand against extremism;
- L. whereas a constitutional referendum took place on 14 and 15 January 2014 and the first

presidential elections after the military coup d'état on 26-27 May 2014 took place in an atmosphere of repression and media censorship; whereas parliamentary elections are due to be held in the country at the end of March 2015; whereas Egypt has been without the main chamber of its parliament since 2012, when a court dissolved the House of Representatives;

- M. whereas it is now almost four years since Hosni Mubarak stepped down after the demonstrations in Tahrir Square and the uprisings throughout Egypt calling for fundamental reforms in the country's political, economic and social system, for an end to the corrupt regime, and for democracy, respect for human rights and better living conditions;
- N. whereas Egypt is the most populous Arab country, with over 80 million people, and is a pivotal country in the southern Mediterranean; whereas it is facing serious security concerns due to the impact of the situation in neighbouring countries, mainly Libya; whereas political, economic and social developments in Egypt have significant implications for the whole region and beyond;
- O. whereas in June 2014 the United States released USD 575 million in military aid to Egypt, which had been frozen since the military coup against Morsi;
- P. whereas in December 2014 the EU proposed a new trade agreement for countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, including Egypt;
- Q. whereas, according to the 2013 report by the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 99 % of Egyptian women have experienced some form of sexual harassment and over one third of women are victims of domestic violence; whereas according to 2008 figures, 91 % of Egyptian women between 15 and 49 are victims of female genital mutilation; whereas child marriage and female genital mutilation persist in the country, despite laws prohibiting them;
- R. whereas, after the decision by the Egyptian interim government to declare the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist group, hundreds of leaders and members and thousands of alleged supporters have been detained and prosecuted; whereas its political wing, the Freedom and Justice Party, was dissolved by a court in August 2014, which prevents its participation in the upcoming elections; whereas the general crackdown affects not only alleged followers of this group but also secular activists, journalists, human rights defenders, students or trade unionists;
- S. whereas on 7 December 2014 a group of around 30 men were arrested for 'practising debauchery' in a bathhouse in Cairo in the largest single arrest of alleged gay men since 2001 under the Mubarak regime; whereas the detention was recorded by a pro-government television network; whereas this public humiliation is one of the signs of the intensifying government clampdown on the LGBTBI community in Egypt;
- T. whereas on 24 November 2013 Law No 107 on organising the right to peaceful public meetings, processions and protests was passed by a presidential decree; whereas this 'protests law' includes measures for controls and sanctions in the event of non-compliance which may be considered disproportionate according to international

standards as it gives the security forces the right to break up any gathering held without prior government authorisation and allows the use of lethal force against demonstrators; whereas the UN Secretary-General has reiterated the concerns expressed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights that the law passed could lead to serious breaches of the right to freedom of peaceful assembly;

- U. whereas al-Jazeera journalists were prosecuted on charges of ‘airing false news’ and of ‘aiding a terrorist group’; whereas the Cairo court which tried 20 people, including nine Al-Jazeera workers, has sentenced Australian correspondent Peter Greste (7 years) Al-Jazeera’s Cairo bureau chief Mohamed Fahmy (7 years) and Egyptian producer Baher Mohammed (10 years) to multi-year prison sentences after finding them guilty of spreading false news, harming national unity and social peace, and membership of a terrorist organisation; whereas the court sentenced 11 other journalists and opposition members in absentia to 10 years’ imprisonment;
 - V. whereas hundreds of students have been arrested during protests and clashes, detained and ill-treated since Morsi was ousted; whereas in the 2013-2014 academic year at least 14 students died;
 - W. whereas an Egyptian court has sentenced a student to three years in jail for announcing on Facebook that he is an atheist; whereas in December 2012 a blogger was sentenced to three years in jail on charges of blasphemy; whereas in June 2014 a Coptic Christian was sentenced to six years in jail for insulting Islam;
 - X. whereas the crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt remains mostly closed; whereas Egyptian authorities have begun implementing the second phase of the flattening of large swaths of Rafah where over 2 000 families live, and the widening of the buffer zone between the Egyptian border town and the Gaza Strip; whereas hundreds of families have also been displaced due to the military activity in the area and those who have not received any compensation from the government are living in camps west of Al-Arish;
1. Is deeply concerned at the general clampdown in Egypt on democratic rights, such as freedom of expression and of assembly; considers that the right of political association should be guaranteed as long as democratic principles are respected; recalls that participation in peaceful protests or criticism of the government should not be grounds for detention or prosecution;
 2. Calls on the Egyptian authorities to put an end to all acts of harassment and repression, including at judicial level, against activists, journalists, the political opposition, human rights defenders and trade unionists; urges them to release prisoners of conscience, such as Ibrahim Halawa;
 3. Is concerned at the law restricting protests; calls on Egypt to fulfil its international human rights obligations in this respect;
 4. Expresses deep concern at the deliberate use of mass death sentences as an instrument of arbitrary and politically motivated prosecution by the state in order to clamp down on political dissent; is also concerned at the continuation of arbitrary arrests and human

right violations committed by security forces, including the arrest of media professionals and activists and their ill-treatment in detention;

5. Reiterates its strong opposition to the use of the death penalty in all cases and under all circumstances and its call on the Egyptian authorities to introduce a moratorium on executions as a first step towards the abolition of capital punishment;
6. Calls on the Egyptian judiciary to ensure the right of defendants to a fair trial based on clear charges and proper and independent investigations, as well as the right of access to and contact with lawyers and family members, in line with international standards;
7. Reiterates its condemnation of the military coup d'état and the brutal repression by the Egyptian army; deeply deplores the loss of lives, injuries and destruction in Cairo and other parts of Egypt; reiterates its opinion that the leaders and generals of the Egyptian army cannot offer a way forward to advance the rightful demands of the Egyptian people, as the army's leadership holds powerful economic positions within Egypt and represents different economic and political interests from those of the workers, the poor and young people who demand social justice and higher living standards;
8. Reiterates its support for the demands made by the Egyptian people for freedom, human dignity, social justice, democracy, respect for human rights, better living conditions and a secular state, and in particular for their demands for wage increases to match price increases, and for housing, health and job creation;
9. Insists that the future of Egypt must rest firmly in the hands of the Egyptian people, without any external interference; is opposed to any external interference, namely by the US, Israel or Saudi Arabia;
10. Deplores the support provided for decades by the EU and some Member State governments to the regime of Hosni Mubarak in particular; reiterates that economic, political, social, cultural and all other types of relations between the EU and any ENP country must be based on equality of treatment, non-interference, solidarity, dialogue and respect for the specific asymmetries and characteristics of each country;
11. Calls for an independent and impartial committee of inquiry to be set up to investigate breaches of human rights committed during Mubarak's regime, under Morsi's presidency, following the military coup d'état, in particular the killing of more than 800 people during the dismantling of the Rab'a al-Adawiya sit-in, and under Al-Sisi's presidency, including cases of extrajudicial execution and arbitrary arrest, and for those responsible to be identified and, where appropriate, brought to justice, with compensation offered to victims and their families;
12. Calls on the Member States to ban the export of security equipment and military aid to Egypt that could be used to suppress peaceful protest and dissent;
13. Reiterates its call to the Egyptian authorities to urgently re-open the Rafah border in order to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people, aggravated by the last massacre committed by the Israeli army;

14. Regrets the fact that, despite a new law on sexual harassment, violence against women has been worsening, especially in the public sphere, with dozens of cases of rape and sexual violence occurring during protests; urges the Egyptian authorities to cease criminalising LGBTI people for expressing their sexual orientation and exercising their right of assembly, on the basis of the ‘debauchery law’, and to release all LGBTI people arrested and imprisoned under that law;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean, the African Union and the Government and Parliament of Egypt.