



Plenary sitting

9.6.2015

B8-0575/2015

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

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

pursuant to Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on Syria: situation in Palmyra and the case of Mazen Darwish
(2015/2732(RSP))

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on behalf of the ECR Group

B8-0575/2015

**European Parliament resolution on Syria: situation in Palmyra and the case of Mazen Darwish
(2015/2732(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

– having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Syria and the ISIS offensive, and in particular those of 30 April 2015, the 12 of February 2015 and of 18 September 2014;

-having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948

- having regard to the Communication of the European Commission of 6 February 2015 entitled "Items relating to an EU Regional Strategy for Syria and Iraq and to the threat of Daesh",

- having regard to its resolution of 28 April 2015 on the destruction of cultural property by ISIS/Daesh,

- having regard to Article 167 TFEU which provides that "the Union and its Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and relevant international organizations in the field of culture";

- having regard to the Regulation EC No 116/2009 of 18 December 2008 on the export of cultural goods;

- having regard to the UNESCO Convention of 17 October 2003 for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage,

- having regard to the 1999 second protocol to the Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict

– having regard to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the additional protocols thereto,

- having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas after four years of a conflict of extreme violence and brutality between the government and opposition groups in Syria more than 200 000 people have died and 12.2 million people need humanitarian assistance;

B. whereas after a new offensive in April-May 2015 ISIS grabbed Palmyra on May 21, controlling now 50 percent of Syrian territory, and executed more than 200 persons before destroying the city Jail,

C. whereas the use of torture, mass arrests and widespread destruction of populated areas has dramatically escalated over the past months; and whereas large numbers of Syrians are being

displaced, some even being forced to move further away from the needed humanitarian assistance;

D. whereas the old town of Palmyra is over 2000 years and is a cultural treasure and a UNESCO world heritage site; whereas it is reported that ISIS is currently negotiating the sale of historic artefacts with black market traders and is planning the destruction of the items it cannot sell;

E. whereas UNESCO and other partners launched the project "Safeguarding of the Syrian heritage" for a period of three years for providing emergency protection of cultural heritage;

F. whereas the destruction of ancient, cultural, archaeological and religious sites are considered a crime against humanity by the UN sponsored Rome Statute;

G. Whereas on May 3, 2015, Mazen Darwish was awarded the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize "in recognition of the work that he has carried out in Syria;

H. Whereas Marzen Darwish, lawyer and defender of freedom of the press, president of the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression has been detained in a prison of the intelligence services of the Syrian Arab Air Force since 16th February 2012; whereas on 5 February 2013, it is reported that he was charged before an investigating judge of the Anti-Terrorism Court for his work to promote and protect human rights; whereas on May 15, 2013, a UN General Assembly resolution included a demand for his immediate release; whereas Marzan Darwish was last seen by his lawyer on 3 May 2015;

1. Expresses deep concern for the safety and well- being of Marzen Darwish; calls on the Syrian authorities to allow immediate access of Darwish's lawyer to his client; urges for his unconditional release; reiterates commitment to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirming the right to freedom of opinion and expression;
2. Underlines the urgent need for focused international and regional efforts in order to solve the Syrian crisis; continues to urge all members of the UN Security Council to honour their responsibilities with regard to the crisis; urges all countries active in promoting a solution to the crisis to support these efforts;
3. Condemns and is extremely concerned by the seizure of Palmyra by ISIS jihadists; notes reports that the violent assault lasted for nine days; deplors that ISIS has reportedly executed at least 217 people in the city and its surroundings and has allegedly committed multiple serious crimes and other atrocities in the "Caliphate" area;
5. Calls on the UN Security Council to pass a resolution on the defence of all cultural sites threatened by ISIS and other terrorist and extremist groups;
6. Condemns in the strongest possible terms the systematic violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law resulting from the terrorist acts perpetrated by ISIS against the Iraqi and Syrian peoples and states, which may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity under international law;
7. Calls for better intelligence gathering and sharing and to ensure that EU member states take

action to prosecute those who have committed atrocities, including kidnappings, bombings, forced religious conversions and ritual executions of hostages in cold blood;

8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, 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 UN Secretary General, the Secretary-General of the Arab League, the Government and Parliament of the Syrian Arab Republic, and the governments and parliaments of Syria's neighbour countries.