



Plenary sitting

B8-0474/2016

12.4.2016

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 Pakistan, in particular the attack in Lahore
(2016/2644(RSP))

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on behalf of the ECR Group

European Parliament resolution on Pakistan, in particular the attack in Lahore (2016/2644(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Pakistan,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966, to which Pakistan is a party,
 - having regard to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion and Belief of 1981,
 - having regard to the EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief;
 - having regard to the EU-Pakistan five-year engagement plan of March 2012, containing priorities such as good governance, and dialogue on human rights,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on Pakistan of 20 July 2015, in which the Council ‘calls on Pakistan to prioritise and take further action to respect, protect and promote freedom of religion or belief, the rights of persons belonging to minorities’ and ‘calls on Pakistan to build on the steps it has taken to prevent and fight terrorism and counter violent extremism, notably through measures to prevent hate speech, curb financing of terrorist organisations, enforce the ban on proscribed organisations, take effective steps against religious persecution,’
 - having regard to the statement of 27 March 2016 by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini on the attack in Lahore, Pakistan,
 - having regard to the statement of 27 March 2016 by United Nations Secretary General Ban-Ki moon on the bombing in Pakistan,
 - having regard to the statement by Nobel Peace Prize winner and Sakharov prize winner Malala Yousafzai of 27 March 2016,
 - having regard to the statements of Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and military spokesman Asim Bajwa following the 27 March attack,
 - having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. Whereas a suicide attack killed more than 70 people, at least 29 children and wounded over 300 in an attack at a funfair in Lahore on Easter Sunday; whereas responsibility for the attack was claimed by the Jamaat-ul-Ahrar faction of the Tehreek-e-Taliban

and was carried out against Lahore's minority Christian community that had gathered to celebrate Easter, although most of those killed were Muslims;

- B. Whereas the attack was widely condemned, both inside Pakistan and by the international community;
 - C. Whereas this horrific attack was only the latest in a seemingly never-ending series of discriminate attacks on Christians and other minorities including Shia, Ahmadiyya, Hindus, Sikh, Kalash, Ismaili and Sufi communities, as well as state institutions;
 - D. Whereas Christians and other minorities not only face persecution by extremists, but also legal discrimination, in particular through Pakistan's blasphemy laws, which are discriminatory and are widely misused by those with personal and political motives; and whereas Muslims themselves continue to be charged under these laws;
 - E. whereas the UN Human Rights Committee in its General Comment 34 stated that "blasphemy laws are incompatible with the ICCPR";
 - F. Whereas Pakistan enjoys GSP+ trade benefits, but whereas these are conditional upon the ratification and continuing implementation of 27 international conventions, including the ICCPR;
 - G. Whereas at the time of the terrorist attack violent demonstrations were taking place in Islamabad, where supporters of Mumtaz Qadri, the murderer of Governor Salman Taseer, were demanding the execution of Asia Bibi, the woman accused of blasphemy and sentenced to death whose case Governor Taseer defended;
1. Is deeply shocked by the attack on Easter Sunday and strongly condemns these senseless acts of violence on so many innocent people, Christians, Hindus and Muslims alike; expresses its solidarity with the Pakistani people who have to continue to deal with the scourge of religious extremism;
 2. Expresses deep concern about the systemic and grave violations of freedom of religion and belief in Pakistan and strongly condemns the use of violence and discriminatory practices and laws against the country's religious minorities;
 3. Welcomes the government of Pakistan's commitment to tackling the threat posed by religious extremism and calls on the EU and its Member States to continue to provide support and assistance to the Pakistani authorities as they work to defeat those who plan and perpetrate these acts of terror; particularly welcomes Pakistan's adoption of the National Action Plan which promises to crackdown on militants and combat terrorism but notes the heightened vulnerabilities of the country's religious minorities at this time and the need for the Pakistani government to guarantee the rights of all its citizens, regardless of their faith or ethnicity;

4. Welcomes the recent statements by Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and calls on the competent Pakistani authorities to carry out an immediate and impartial investigation not only of the Lahore attack, but of all human rights violations suffered by members of minority religions;
5. Reminds the Pakistani government of its international obligations to uphold the human rights of all its citizens and to ensure that appropriate legal and other remedies applicable under international human rights law are made available to the victims of discriminate violence and persecution;
6. Recalls that Pakistan's blasphemy laws have been repeatedly used to persecute the members of minority faiths, as well as Muslims, and that these laws sustain the culture of religious intolerance and extremism; calls on the government of Pakistan to carry out a thorough review of the blasphemy laws and their current application, in particular Sections 295 B and C of the Penal Code, which prescribe mandatory life sentences (295 B and C) or even the death penalty (295 C) for alleged acts of blasphemy, with a view to repealing, or at the very least to put in place safeguards to prevent abuse of these legal provisions;
7. Calls on the Pakistani authorities to guarantee the independence of the courts, rule of law and due process in line with international standards on judicial proceedings; calls furthermore on the Pakistani authorities to provide sufficient protection to all those involved in blasphemy cases, particularly the country's legal profession, and to protect the accused, their families and communities from mob violence including those who are acquitted but cannot return home;
8. Recalls that freedom of religion and minority rights are guaranteed by Pakistan's constitution and welcomes the measures taken in the interest of religious minorities since November 2008, most notably the introduction of a five per cent quota for minorities in the federal jobs sector, recognising non-Muslim public holidays and the declaration of a National Minorities Day; encourages the government of Pakistan to take further steps to integrate and protect minority communities;
9. Calls on the Pakistani government to respond to the request made in 2012 (and two subsequent requests) for a country visit by UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Heiner Bielefeldt, and to the requests for a country visit made by the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, Rita Izsak;
10. Calls on the EU as a whole, and the EU Delegation in Pakistan to monitor developments and to use all appropriate tools and policy instruments, including political pressure at the highest levels, to safeguard the exercise of the freedom of religion or belief and to support members of minority religions;
11. Urges the EU and its Member States to stand by Pakistan as violent demonstrations continue to take place by supporters of Mumtaz Qadri;

12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the European Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the UN, the UN Human Rights Council, and the Government and Parliament of Pakistan.