



Plenary sitting

B8-0191/2017

14.3.2017

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 Zimbabwe, the case of Pastor Evan Mawarire
(2017/2608(RSP))

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on behalf of the ECR Group

B8-0191/2017

European Parliament resolution on Zimbabwe, the case of Pastor Evan Mawarire (2017/2608(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Zimbabwe,
- having regard to the local EU statement on violence of 12 July 2016,
- having regard to the local EU statement on the abduction of Itai Dzamara of 9 March 2017,
- having regard to Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/288 of 17 February 2017 amending Decision 2011/101/CFSP concerning restrictive measures against Zimbabwe,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of December 1948,
- having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of June 1981, which Zimbabwe has ratified,
- having regard to the Constitution of Zimbabwe,
- having regard to the Cotonou Agreement,
- having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,

A whereas Zimbabwe once enjoyed an abundance of natural resources, a booming agricultural sector and a wealth of human capital, this has now been squandered and almost a quarter of Zimbabweans are currently in need of food assistance and 72% live in poverty;

B. whereas the people of Zimbabwe have suffered for many years under an authoritarian regime led by President Mugabe that maintains its power through corruption, violence, rigged elections and a brutal security apparatus;

C. whereas unrest is growing in crisis-ridden Zimbabwe against a background of rampant inflation, widespread unemployment, state corruption and efforts by the authorities to suppress freedom of expression and political opposition;

D. whereas since May 2016 thousands of demonstrators have protested against deteriorating economic conditions that include inflation, money shortages, food shortages and unemployment: whereas only the army is being paid regularly and with currency of worth;

E. whereas the protest movement led by Pastor Evan Mawarire, and using the hashtag #ThisFlag has drawn support from churches and the middle class which had hitherto tended to avoid street politics;

- F. whereas on 6 July 2016 a general stay-at-home strike organised by Pastor Mawarire and #This Flag was heeded by an unusually large number of people, the largest anti-government protest in years, demanding that President Mugabe address the serious problems facing Zimbabwe; whereas the youth movement Tajamuka-Sesijukile also took part in the protests;
- G. whereas on 13 July 2016 a magistrate's court in Harare dismissed treason charges against Mawarire declaring that the state had acted unconstitutionally and as such there were no charges to answer;
- H. whereas Pastor Mawarire fled Zimbabwe on 14 July 2016 after a failed abduction attempt, first to South Africa and then to the United States where he stayed until February 2017;
- I. whereas on 1st February 2017 on his return to Zimbabwe from the United States he was arrested by the Zimbabwe security services at the airport before he reached Zimbabwe immigration and was charged by the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) with subverting a constitutional government under section 22 (2) of the Criminal Law Act;
- J. whereas on 8th February at a hearing in the High Court in Harare he was granted bail of USD 300 after the court found the State's case weak with no compelling reason to maintain him in detention
- K. whereas President Mugabe as head of the ZANU-PF party has been in power with his party continuously since independence in 1980 and is seeking re-election in 2018 and whereas several members of his government have denounced calls for electoral reform ahead of the 2018 elections;
- L. whereas the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission said that the food aid, mobilised to assist hungry villagers affected by the recent drought across the country, was being distributed along party lines, with Zanu-PF officials denying food aid to opposition party supporters; whereas according to the government half the rural population faces starvation;
- M. whereas 9 March 2017, marks two years since the abduction of journalist turned human rights defender Itai Dzamara, the fate of Mr Dzamara remains unknown and his family continues to fear for his life;
- N. whereas the EU restrictive measures against the Zimbabwe regime were renewed in February 2017 until 20 February 2018; whereas the asset freeze and travel bans will continue to apply to President Mugabe, Grace Mugabe and Zimbabwe Defence Industries; whereas an arms embargo will remain in place; whereas the EU has lifted restrictions on 78 people and 8 entities;
1. Calls on the Zimbabwean authorities to drop all charges against Pastor Mawarire, to restore his passport and to cease harassing him and using abusive judicial tactics against him;
 2. Expresses serious concerns about the increase in violence during demonstrations in Zimbabwe in the past year; calls on the authorities in Zimbabwe to respect the right to demonstrate peacefully to address genuine concerns; and urges them to investigate allegations of excessive use of force and other human rights abuses by elements within the

Zimbabwe Police, and to hold them to account;

3. Is worried about the rise of arbitrary arrests of human rights defenders and those engaging in peaceful and lawful demonstrations and urges that the rule of law should be respected and that the constitution should be upheld;
4. Believes that the EU restrictive measures against Zimbabwe can only be lifted if President Mugabe and the government build a more inclusive country based on the rule of law, respect for human rights and the consolidation of democracy; considers that the lifting of restrictive measures was clearly premature and that the Council and Commission should re-impose restrictive measures on all those who are responsible for human rights abuses and repressive measures against the population, including the manipulation of the food supply;
5. Calls for a peaceful transition of power based on a free and fair election process, rule of law and human rights in order to develop a prosperous, pluralistic country;
6. Demands that Zanu-PF stops manipulating food aid for political gain and notes that blocking food supplies is a violation of international humanitarian law;
7. Calls on the Zimbabwean authorities to ascertain Mr Dzamara's whereabouts and to ensure that those who are responsible for his abduction face justice; notes that expressing opinion in a non-violent way is a constitutional right for all Zimbabwean citizens and it is the obligation of the authorities to protect the rights of all its citizens;
8. 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 Council, the Commission, the governments and the parliaments of the Member States, the EEAS, the Government and Parliament of Zimbabwe, the governments of the South African Development Community, the African Union, the Pan-African Parliament, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth.