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*Plenary sitting*

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**B8-0224/2017**

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))

**Cristian Dan Preda, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Tomáš Zdechovský,  
Marijana Petir, Jarosław Wałęsa, Pavel Svoboda, Ivan Štefanec, Lefteris  
Christoforou, Elisabetta Gardini, Milan Zver, Brian Hayes, David  
McAllister, Eduard Kukan, Laima Liucija Andrikiienė, József Nagy,  
Michaela Šojdroyá, Mairead McGuinness, Roberta Metsola, Romana  
Tomc, Patricija Šulin, Maurice Ponga, Sven Schulze, Csaba Sógor,  
Željana Zovko, Ivana Maletić, Stanislav Polčák, Deirdre Clune, Giovanni  
La Via, Claude Rolin, Adam Szejnfeld, Lorenzo Cesa, Jiří Pospíšil, Ramón  
Luis Valcárcel Siso, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska, Therese Comodini  
Cachia, Andrey Kovatchev, Inese Vaidere, Dubravka Šuica, Francisco  
José Millán Mon**  
on behalf of the PPE Group

**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 Local Governance of 30 June 2016,
  - having regard to the Local EU Statement on violence of 12 July 2016,
  - having regard to Statement of the EU Delegation to Zimbabwe on 1 February 2017,
  - having regard to the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission's press statement on public protests and police conduct,
  - having regard to Council Decisions 2016/20/CFSP of 15 February 2016 extending EU restrictive measures against Zimbabwe until 20 February 2017,
  - having regard to the Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU of 19 February 2014 on the review of EU-Zimbabwe relations,
  - having regard to the Global Political Agreement signed in 2008 by the three main political parties, namely ZANU PF, MDC-T and MDC,
  - having regard to the Council of the European Union conclusions of 23 July 2012 on Zimbabwe and to Council Implementing Decision 2012/124/CFSP concerning restrictive measures against Zimbabwe,
  - having regard to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights of June 1981, which Zimbabwe has ratified,
  - having regard to the EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief
  - 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 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; whereas the people of Zimbabwe have

not experienced true freedom in decades and many under the age of thirty have therefore only known lives of poverty and violent repression;

- B. whereas the #ThisFlag independent social media movement founded by Evan Mawarire, pastor and human rights defenders based in Harare, catalysed frustration of citizens with the Mugabe regime during last year's protests in Zimbabwe; whereas Pastor Mawarire has called on the government to address the failing economy and respect human rights; whereas the #ThisFlag movement has drawn support from churches and the middle class, which had hitherto tended to steer clear of street politics;
  - C. whereas Pastor Evan Mawarire was already arrested on charges of incitement to commit public violence and released in July 2016 and has been subsequently forced to leave Zimbabwe the same month, for fear of his and his family's safety;
  - D. whereas on 1 February 2017, Pastor Evan Mawarire, was arrested at Harare airport as he returned to Zimbabwe; whereas he was initially charged with "subverting a constitutional government" under Section 22 of the Criminal Procedure Act, which is punishable with imprisonment for up to 20 years; whereas on February 2<sup>nd</sup> another charge, that of insulting the flag, under Section 6 of the Flag of Zimbabwe Act was added; whereas Pastor Mawarire was only released on bail after having spent 9 days in custody;
  - E. whereas in a public statement, the Zimbabwean Human Rights Commission expressed deep concern about the brutality and violent conduct of the police, stating that the fundamental rights of the demonstrators were violated, and called on the Zimbabwean authorities to investigate and bring the perpetrators to justice;
  - F. whereas Zimbabwe is a signatory to the Cotonou Agreement, Article 96 of which stipulates that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is an essential element of ACP-EU cooperation;
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- 1. Deplores the arrest of Pastor Evan Mawarire; stresses that his release on bail is not sufficient and that the politically motivated charges against him must be completely withdrawn;
  - 2. Calls on the Zimbabwean authorities to ensure that the criminal justice system is not misused to target, harass or intimidate human rights defenders like Pastor Evan Mawarire;
  - 3. Believes that freedom of assembly, association and expression are essential components of any democracy; stresses that expressing an opinion in a non-violent way is a constitutional right for all Zimbabwean citizens and reminds the authorities of their obligation to protect the rights of all its citizens.
  - 4. Is deeply concerned by reports of human rights organisations of increasing political violence, as well as the severe restrictions and intimidations faced by human rights defenders; regrets that since the last elections, and the adoption of the new Constitution in 2013, little progress has been made with regard to the rule of law and in particular towards reforming the human rights environment;

5. Reiterates its call on the Zimbabwean authorities to immediately and unconditionally release all political prisoners;
6. Calls on the EU delegation in Harare to continue to offer its assistance to Zimbabwe in order to improve the human rights situation;
7. Stresses again the importance for the EU to start up a political dialogue with the Zimbabwean authorities under Articles 8 and 96 of the Cotonou Agreement;
8. Instructs its President to forward this Resolution to the Commission, the Council, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EEAS, the Government and the Parliament of Zimbabwe, the governments of the South African Development Community and the African Union.