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*Plenary sitting*

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**B8-0368/2018**

11.9.2018

## 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 Uganda, arrest of parliamentarians from the opposition  
(2018/2840(RSP))

**Lola Sánchez Caldentey, Marie-Christine Vergiat, Miguel Urbán Crespo,  
Estefanía Torres Martínez, Xabier Benito Ziluaga, Tania González Peñas,  
Patrick Le Hyaric, Malin Björk, Dimitrios Papadimoulis, Stelios  
Kouloglou, Merja Kyllönen**  
on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

**European Parliament resolution on Uganda, arrest of parliamentarians from the opposition  
(2018/2840(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948, to which Uganda is a signatory,
  - having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights which was adopted on 27 June 1981 and entered into force on 21 October 1986,
  - having regard to its resolution of 13 March 2014 on launching consultations to suspend Uganda and Nigeria from the Cotonou Agreement in view of recent legislation further criminalising homosexuality (2014/2634(RSP)),
  - having regard to its previous resolutions on serious human rights violations
  - having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure
- A. whereas on 13 August 2018, Ugandan police and military arrested and beat six opposition members of Parliament, at least two journalists, and 28 other people in advance of the August 15 by-elections in the northwestern town of Arua; whereas in recent days, protesters took to the streets in Kampala, Mityana, and other areas to decry the arrests and violence;
- B. whereas opposition politicians and the defendants' lawyer have said the detained MPs and their co-accused were tortured during their arrest and detention; whereas Kampala-based EU diplomats said in a joint statement underlined that “the reported brutal treatment of elected members of the Uganda Parliament, journalists and civilians, as well as the loss of human life, are very disquieting events”;
- C. whereas according to Uganda's law the MPs arrested may be held in detention for 360 days before they are entitled to bail; whereas the above mentions arrests also highlight concerns about Uganda's law on bail and remand;
- D. whereas this detentions demonstrate that violations of freedom of association, assembly, and expression continue in Uganda;
- E. whereas in 2017, authorities harshly repressed opposition to the government's removal of presidential age limits from the constitution, allowing President Museveni, in power since 1986, to run again in 2021; whereas police have blocked the opposition from accessing media and public meetings, whereas nongovernmental organizations risk politically motivated charges for allegedly failing to comply with legal provisions that impose vague “special obligations” on independent groups;
- F. whereas in February 2016, President Yoweri Museveni, in power for more than 30 years,

was declared the winner of the presidential elections; whereas local observers said the elections were not free and fair, and international observers -including the EU- argued the process failed to meet international standards;

- G. whereas President Museveni has been accused by critics of using security forces to stifle opposition through intimidation, beatings, detentions and prosecutions on trumped-up charges;
- H. whereas Mr. Museveni has enjoyed Western support for having contributed to the fight against jihadism, particularly through the Ugandan role in an African peacekeeping force in Somalia; whereas this support is now reinforced due to the role Uganda is playing in EU policy of externalization of its borders and migration flows control;
- I. whereas Uganda hosted the largest number of refugees and asylum-seekers in the region, including over 1 million from South Sudan, hundreds of thousands from DRC, and thousands from Burundi and Somalia; whereas Uganda is part of the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative, also known as the 'Khartoum Process', launched in the second half of 2014 under the Italian Presidency of the EU, which aims to externalise EU border control and limit the number of migrants and people in need of international protection travelling to Europe under the pretext of the fight against human trafficking and migrant smuggling;
- J. whereas in 2017 there was a sharp rise in the number of women killed, some of whom were subjected to sexual violence;
- K. whereas the right of housing is under threat since in July 2017, the Ugandan government tabled a bill to amend Article 26(2) of the Constitution which if carried would allow compulsory acquisition by the government of private land for infrastructure projects without providing prompt, prior and fair compensation to the owners; whereas marginalized groups, including people living in poverty, and in rural areas, would be particularly affected;
- L. whereas weak economic system, huge inequalities and poverty remain factors of big concern in Uganda; whereas more than 19% of the Ugandan population lives below the poverty line; whereas access to essential public services is scarce in Uganda;
- M. whereas the relations between the European Union and Uganda in terms of cooperation for development are guided by the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) National Indicative Programme (NIP) 2014-2020 ; whereas the 11th EDF-NIP provides €578 million for the above mentioned period to help Uganda to respond to the country's needs and aspirations; whereas through the EDF, the EU is providing Uganda support in the form of non-repayable grants for the following three thematic areas: Good Governance, Transport Infrastructure, Food Security and Agriculture; whereas most part of this development programmes are delivered through budget support which has a proven record on development effectiveness and notably boost policy dialogue; whereas Uganda also receives 44,3 million euros from the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa; whereas this Trust Fund uses official development aid for security and migration flows control proposes;

1. Strongly condemns the arrest of opposition MPs in Uganda and the increasing violations of political rights in the country;
2. Is deeply worried about the generalised deterioration of human rights in Uganda, including social and political rights, freedom of expression, gender equality rights and right to housing;
3. Expresses grave concern at the increasing number of physical attacks on human rights defenders and civil society groups, such as the Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum; urges the Ugandan authorities to guarantee the safety of human rights defenders, prosecute attacks against them and enable them to carry out their work free of threats and impediments;
4. Recalls that bail laws should be in accordance with international law;
5. Deplores the role the EU is playing in Uganda turning its view away from this abuses and just focusing on boosting EUs geostrategic interest;
6. Recalls the importance of social policies to enhance social cohesion and good governance;
7. Calls on the EU to take advantage of the political dialogue's leverage power allowed by development aid programs, namely budget support programs, to enhance the defence and promotion of human rights and the UN Sustainable Development Agenda in Uganda;
8. Strongly condemns the Khartoum Process which legitimates governments who are themselves the source of forced migration; condemns the financial support of the EU for policies whose aim it is to externalise border controls under the pretext of the fight against trafficking and to create 'information campaign' which in reality legitimises authoritarian regimes and dictatorships without changing the current situation of the people in need in those countries; Calls for ensuring rights and a safe passage to both migrants and displaced; rejects any attempt to use ODA for security or migration flows control proposes;
9. 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 President of the Republic of Uganda, the Speaker of the Ugandan Parliament and the African Union and its institutions.