



Plenary sitting

B8-0378/2018

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))

Marietje Schaake, Petras Auštrevičius, Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Dita Charanzová, Gérard Deprez, Martina Dlabajová, Nadja Hirsch, Ivan Jakovčić, Petr Ježek, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Patricia Lalonde, Valentinas Mazuronis, Louis Michel, Javier Nart, Urmas Paet, Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruiz, Carolina Punset, Jozo Radoš, Frédérique Ries, Robert Rochefort, Ramon Tremosa i Balcells, Ivo Vajgl, Johannes Cornelis van Baalen, Hilde Vautmans, Cecilia Wikström, Filiz Hyusmenova

on behalf of the ALDE Group

B8-0378/2018

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

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Uganda,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ratified by the Republic of Uganda on 21 June 1995,
 - having regard to the United Nations Convention against Torture of 10 December 1984
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948, to which Uganda is a signatory,
 - having regard to the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement ('Cotonou Agreement'),
 - having regard to the Uganda's Constitution of 1995 amended in 2005,
 - having regard to the joint local statement on Arua municipality by-election issued on 17 August 2018 by The European Union Delegation, the Heads of Mission of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and UK, and the Heads of Mission of Norway and Iceland in Uganda,
 - having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of procedure,
- A. Whereas Kizza Besigye, the leader for Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) and a four time presidential candidate was arrested 7 times by security forces between 2001 and 2017;
- B. Whereas on 13 August 2018, Ugandan police and military arrested and beat four opposition Members of Parliament (Robert Kyagulanyi, Francis Zaake, Gerald Karuhanga, and Paul Mwiru), two former Members of Parliament (Mike Mabikke and Kassiano Wadri) and at least two journalists (Herbert Zzziwa and Ronald Muwanga) as well as 28 other people while they were campaigning for an opposition candidate in advance of the August 15 by-elections in the town of Arua;
- C. whereas the arrests ensued in the aftermath of an incident in which security officers shot dead Yasin Kawuma, the driver of MP Robert Kyagulanyi, better known as Bobi Wine, who was elected as an independent Member of Parliament during a legislative by-election on 29 June 2017; whereas the arrests have sparked deadly riots in the country; whereas one person was killed and five other protesters were injured when police fired teargas and live bullets in Mityana at about 60 km from Kampala, according to media on 19 August 2018; whereas protests also occurred in Kamwokya, Gayaza, and Mukono townships;

- D. whereas security forces have arrested journalists covering live events and have forced them to delete footage;
- E. whereas military prosecutors charged Member of Parliament and famous musician Bobi Wine alias Robert Kyagulanyi with unlawful possession of firearms and ammunition before a military court after he had been held incommunicado for three days; whereas his lawyers and his family said that members of the military's Special Forces Command tortured him and he appeared unsteady on his feet in court;
- F. whereas following pressure, the court later dropped the initial weapons charges against Bobi Wine, but presented new charges of treason over his alleged role in a stone-throwing campaign against President Yoweri Museveni's convoy while traveling in northwestern Uganda; whereas Bobi Wine was released on bail and allowed to leave the country and was admitted to a hospital in Washington for treatment on 2 September 2018;
- G. whereas Bobi Wine joined activists in July of this year to protest against a social media tax introduced to apparently boost state revenue and end what President Museveni described as "gossip" on WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter; whereas activists say that the social media tax is aimed at suppressing dissenting voices;
- H. whereas in Uganda not a single peaceful transfer of power took place since independence from Britain in 1962; whereas Yoweri Museveni took power by force in 1986 and since then, the Constitution has been amended periodically to allow him to stay in power; whereas Mr Museveni is in his fifth presidential term as the 2005 amendments to the Uganda's Constitution lifted the two term limit; whereas the ruling party enjoying its overwhelming majority in the National Assembly have passed a bill that removed the age limit of 75 to run in a presidential election to enable President Yoweri Museveni to seek a sixth term when his current mandate expires in 2021 and may expand to a life presidency;
- I. whereas security forces harshly repressed opposition to the removal of presidential age limits of 75 years from the Constitution, last on 25 September 2017;
- J. whereas during more than two decades (1990-2015) the GDP of Uganda grew at an average of 6.7 % annually according to "World Development Indicators" of the World Bank; whereas the economic management of the country by President Yoweri Museveni is put forward as model of good governance;
- K. whereas Uganda has been lauded across the world for its progressive refugee policy with 1,395,146 refugees and asylum-seekers as of January 2018 according to UNHCR and Government of Uganda, its involvement in regional peace and security issues *such as DRC, South Sudan, Burundi, and its participation in the fight against terrorism by deploying forces in Somalia; whereas the cooperative regional policies are shielding the government of Uganda from critical questions about respect for human rights and respect for the rule of law, as well as corruption and rising authoritarianism;*

- L. whereas there are serious concerns about the respect for human rights rule of law, free press, civil society and for people who are critical of the government; whereas Uganda is party to the United Nations Convention against Torture and one of only ten African countries with anti-torture legislation;
1. expresses deep concern over the events that occurred during the Arua Municipality by-election, the reported brutal treatment and arrest of elected Members of the Uganda Parliament including Bobi Wine, journalists and civilians, as well as the loss of human lives; calls on Ugandan security forces to show restraint while policing protests, acting lawfully and with full respect for human rights law, and to let journalists and civil society do their work without fear of intimidation or assault;
 2. Emphasises the importance of freedom of expression and the key role played by media in a democratic society; expresses concern over the social media tax as it endangers freedom of expression;
 3. calls on the Ugandan authorities to launch a prompt, independent, impartial and effective investigation and prosecute all those responsible for the deaths of people in Arua and Mityana and to guarantee due process and fair trial; calls for independent investigations into the killing of Yasin Kawuma and the severe mistreatment of all those arrested; calls on the government to ensure that the victims of torture have access to quality health care to deal with the physical and psychological impact;
 4. calls upon the Government of Uganda, political parties and civil society to cooperate in addressing in a swift and transparent way the events that have caused suffering to citizens and damaged the global image of the country,
 5. urges the Government of Uganda to protect fundamental freedoms and end the deeply problematic efforts to silence political opposition and stifle dissenting voices in the country; urges law enforcement to comply with Article 24 of Uganda's Constitution which stipulates that "no person shall be subject to any form of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment";
 6. Calls on the VP/HR and the EEAS to closely monitor the situation in Uganda and any signs that opposition Members of Parliament in Uganda are hindered or obstructed in their work as legislators;
 7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and 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.