



Plenary sitting

B8-0569/2018

11.12.2018

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 Egypt, notably the situation of human rights defenders
(2018/2968(RSP))

**Charles Tannock, Bas Belder, Ryszard Czarnecki, Branislav Škripek,
Pirkko Ruohonen-Lerner, Valdemar Tomaševski, Monica Macovei, Ruža
Tomašić, Urszula Krupa**
on behalf of the ECR Group

B8-0569/2018

**European Parliament resolution on Egypt, notably the situation of human rights defenders
(2018/2968(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Egypt;
- having regard to the previous statements of the Vice President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the situation in Egypt;
- having regard to the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2017, Egypt Update of 31 May 2018;
- having regard to the conclusions of the 7th EU-Egypt Association Council, held in Brussels on 25 July 2017;
- having regard to Council Conclusions of 6 February 2017 on the situation in Egypt;
- having regard to the EU-Egypt partnership priorities for 2017-2020;
- having regard to statement by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to housing of 4 December 2018;
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948;
- having regard to the African Charter on Human Rights and Peoples of 1981, ratified by Egypt on 20 March 1984;
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Egypt is a party;
- having regard to the Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt;
- having regard to the Arab Charter on Human Rights, to which Egypt is a party;
- having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure;

A. whereas Egypt is an important partner for the European Union and its Member States in a wide range of areas including trade, security, and people to people contacts, and is critical to the stability of the Middle East and North African region;

B. whereas the European Union and its Member States have sought to support the Egyptian government and Egyptian people in implementing domestic economic, political, and social reforms since the fall of President Hosni Mubarak in 2011;

C. whereas the security situation in Egypt is fragile, with a high risk of terrorist attacks in the Sinai peninsula and major cities across the country by various Islamist organisations;

D. whereas the human rights situation in Egypt has deteriorated over the past few years, with increasing restrictions placed on civil society, freedom of expression and the media, political freedoms, freedom of assembly, and concerns about police brutality, the use of mass trials, travel bans, and detention without trial have been reported;

E. whereas reportedly human rights defenders face an extremely challenging situation due to restrictions imposed on civil society, as well as ongoing smear campaigns against them;

F. whereas violence and discrimination against Egyptians of Coptic descent, who make up the majority of Egypt's nine million Christians, has risen since 2011; whereas numerous attacks by Islamist organisation, including local Islamic State affiliated groups, have targeted Christians and their places of worship, injuring and killing hundreds; whereas Coptic Pope Tawadros II has noted that the attacks on Christians are an attack on "Egyptian Unity";

G. whereas Christians often face difficulty obtaining building permits for Christian places of worship, and Christian businesses have been boycotted; whereas a Coptic diaspora of over one million people now resides outside the traditional Coptic areas of Egypt, Sudan, and Libya, largely due to ongoing persecution in their countries of origin; whereas Egypt's Coptic Christians have been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, for choosing peaceful coexistence over retaliation in the face of persecution;

H. whereas Special Envoy Figel visited Egypt and exchanged views on the situation of Christians in Egypt, during which the socio-economic development was noted as a major challenge;

1. Supports the Egyptian people and Egyptian government in addressing the country's economic, political and security challenges, and believes these aspirations must be met in full respect of human rights, fundamental freedoms, and international law;

2. Reaffirms its commitment to Egypt as a key strategic partner in the region; shares the concerns of the Egyptian people about the economic, political and security challenges facing their country and their region, and again reaffirms its offer to grant support in addressing such issues;

3. Supports the aspirations of the majority of Egyptian people who want to establish a free, stable, prosperous, inclusive, and democratic country which respects its national and international commitments on human rights and fundamental freedoms;

4. Believes that as a major actor in the Middle East and North Africa, Egypt's aspirations to transition to a democratic state has the potential to be the role model for many other states in the region;

5. Expresses grave concern about the reported systematic targeting of human rights defenders and a zero-tolerance approach to dissent by the Egyptian authorities, often under the pretext of

countering terrorism; condemns the mass arrests of human rights workers, lawyers and political activists;

6. Expresses further concern about human rights defenders facing prolonged periods of detention for their peaceful and legitimate defence of human rights and calls on the Egyptian authorities to abide by their international commitments and respect the freedom of expression and freedom of association;

7. Urges the Egyptian authorities to ensure that all detained human rights defenders are afforded every right to due process and a fair, impartial and public trial in accordance with Egypt's obligations under international human rights law and calls on the Egyptian authorities to immediately reveal the whereabouts of human rights defenders who have disappeared;

8. Deplores the significant rise in the number of people sentenced to death in Egypt since 2014, especially in the cases where the death sentence has been handed down to children; calls on the Egyptian authorities to review its use of the death penalty;

9. Condemns the continued persecution of minority groups in Egypt; calls on the Egyptian authorities, including the military and security forces, to respect the rights of Christians and protect them against violence and discrimination and ensure the prosecution of those responsible; welcomes the recent visit of Special Envoy Figel and the exchange of views on the situation of Christians in Egypt;

10. Welcomes President Sisi's efforts to protect the Christian minority in Egypt and his statements calling for a renewal of Islamic discourse to challenge extremism and radicalisation; calls on President Sisi to ensure the right to worship for every Egyptian and allow the building and restoration of churches without restrictions; calls on Egypt to review its blasphemy laws and ensure the protection of religious minorities from this law;

11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the EEAS, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the President, Government, and Parliament of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the African Union, and the Arab League.