



Plenary sitting

B8-0111/2019

12.2.2019

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 women's rights defenders in Saudi Arabia
(2019/2564(RSP))

Charles Tannock, Karol Karski, Jana Žitňanská, Ruža Tomašić, Notis Marias, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Ryszard Czarnecki, Branislav Škripek, Valdemar Tomaševski, Monica Macovei
on behalf of the ECR Group

B8-0111/2019

European Parliament resolution on women's rights defenders in Saudi Arabia (2019/2564(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Saudi Arabia;
- having regard to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- having regard to the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- having regard to the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- having regard to the Arab Charter on Human Rights, ratified by Saudi Arabia in 2009;
- having regard to Rule 123 of its Rules of Procedure;

A. whereas since 15 May 2018 reportedly numerous prominent women's and human rights activists have been arrested;

B. whereas Saudi authorities claim the arrests were made after the authorities monitored their coordinated activities, which included suspicious communication with third parties, including foreign officials with the aim of supporting their activities, recruiting persons working in sensitive government positions and resulting the leaking of classified documents, and providing financial support to hostile elements abroad with the aim of undermining the security and stability of Saudi Arabia;

C. whereas international human rights organisations have reported that a group of Saudi Arabian human rights activists detained since May 2018 have been tortured and faced abuse;

D. whereas international concerns have repeatedly been raised about access to justice, women's rights, and restrictions on freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of religion or belief in the Kingdom;

E. whereas the wave of arrests of women's rights activists seem to go counter and may distract from the reform agenda Vision 2030 and recent greater freedoms for women and men in the Kingdom;

F. whereas the driving ban for women in Saudi Arabia was lifted on 24 June 2018;

G. whereas the guardianship framework still applies to Saudi women which severely restricts their rights and freedoms, despite positive changes to the system;

H. whereas Saudi Arabia is an influential, important and key actor in the region with close relations to countries around the world, including the European Union;

1. Condemns the arrests of the human and women's rights activists in the Kingdom and expresses concern about their well-being;
2. Urges the Saudi authorities to ensure that their rights are strictly upheld and calls for their immediate release;
3. Welcomes the proposals set out by the leadership of Saudi Arabia in its Vision 2030 and notes its aims in the wider context of the reform agenda to offer greater freedoms for its citizens; welcomes in this regard the lifting of the driving ban for women inside the Kingdom;
4. Welcomes the recent changes to the guardianship system for Saudi women and calls on the Saudi authorities to abolish the guardianship system in its entirety;
5. Notes that while the process of judicial reform in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia seeks to strengthen the protection of individual rights, it still is not in line with accepted international standards;
6. Urges further significant institutional change in Saudi Arabia to protect the human rights of its residents and allow for greater freedoms;
7. Calls for an enhanced mechanism for dialogue with Saudi Arabia on human rights issues and an exchange of expertise on justice and legal matters in order to strengthen the protection of individual rights in the Kingdom;
8. Welcomes the December 2018 visit of the Saudi women's delegation to the European Parliament and supports further such dialogue and engagement;
9. 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, His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz, the Secretary General of the United Nations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Speaker of the Majlis as-Shura.