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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0136/2019**

22.10.2019

## **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 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on Egypt  
(2019/2880(RSP))

**Anna Fotyga, Karol Karski, Adam Bielan, Witold Jan Waszczykowski,  
Assita Kanko, Ryszard Czarnecki, Ruža Tomašić, Jadwiga Wiśniewska,  
Valdemar Tomaševski, Raffaele Fitto**  
on behalf of the ECR Group

**B9-0136/2019**

**European Parliament resolution on Egypt  
(2019/2880(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Egypt,
- having regard to the EU-Egypt partnership priorities for 2017-2020;
- having regard to the previous statements of the Vice-President / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the situation in Egypt,
- having regard to the statement by the European Union at the 8th meeting of the EU-Egypt Association Council of 20 December 2018,
- having regard to the joint press statement following the 8th EU-Egypt Association Council meeting of 20 December 2018,
- having regard to the EU Item 4 Statement on Egypt at the UN Human Rights Council 42nd Session of 24 September 2019,
- having regard to the Council's annual report on human rights and democracy in the world for 2018 - Egypt country report of 16 May 2019,
- having regard to the African Charter on Human Rights and Peoples of 1981, ratified by Egypt on 20 March 1984,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,
- having regard to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief of 1981,
- 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 144 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 continuously seek to support the Egyptian government and the Egyptian institutions in implementing domestic, economic, political and social reforms;
- C. whereas since early September 2019, Egyptian businessman Mohamed Ali and former Egyptian military contractor, started posting videos from his self-imposed exile in Spain, accusing President Sisi and the military top brass of corruption and calling for a new revolution; whereas President Sisi has called the allegations ‘lies and slander’ and stressed that he was building a new state for all Egyptians;
- D. whereas the videos of Mohamed Ali triggered a series of hashtags on social media, and several small anti-government protests in various cities in Egypt of which some were dispersed by the Egyptian police; whereas protests have been limited, they have been significant, as they signify the first time that Egyptians, under President Sisi, have taken to the streets to express their anger over his policies;
- E. whereas more than 2,600 people have been arrested so far, although Egyptian authorities have also released hundreds after brief detentions; whereas numerous democratic activists were arrested and faced abuse and torture while in jail;
- F. whereas a lot of misinformation has been circulating in the media and on social media, including videos purported to be of the protests but were in fact of Egyptians celebrating an Egyptian football win; whereas Al Jazeera has admitted broadcasting incorrect and misleading information and videos of the protests, however, despite Al Jazeera’s apology it continued broadcasting misinformation about the protests;
- G. whereas analysts have pointed out that the number of registered anonymous Twitter accounts surged in the weeks leading up to the sporadic protests, including Muslim Brotherhood committees which orchestrated a campaign with the hashtag ‘#TahrirSquare’;
- H. whereas BBC monitoring Insight reported on 23 September 2019 that interest groups appeared to be exploiting Twitter hashtags surrounding anti-government protests in Egypt, including many pro-Da’esh groups which had been using bot accounts to urge Egyptians to abandon the ‘futile’ protests and to support the terrorist group instead;
- I. whereas the security situation in Egypt is fragile, with high risk of terrorist attacks in the Sinai peninsula and major cities across the country by various Islamist organisations, despite the government’s use of aggressive and at times abusive tactics to combat it;
- J. whereas Muslim Brotherhood loyalists have engaged in violence in Egypt and sought to de-rail President Sisi’s efforts to re-establish stability and security in the country;

- K. whereas President Sisi has passed painful austerity measures to help the Egyptian economy and which have, unfortunately, badly hit the country's poor and middle classes;
- L. whereas according to reports the human rights situation in Egypt has deteriorated over the past few years and even described as more repressive than under former President Mubarak, with reports noting the increase of restrictions placed on civil society, freedom of expression and the media, political freedoms, freedoms of assembly, and concerns about police brutality, the use of mass trials, travel bans and detention without trial; whereas reportedly human rights defenders face a challenging situation due to restrictions imposed as well as ongoing smear campaigns against them;
- M. whereas according to credible reports, arrests, harsh prison terms, death sentences, extrajudicial violence, forced disappearances and various forms of pressure targeting activists, parties and political movements that criticize the government were common in 2018;
- N. whereas new laws to regulate the media and the internet were ratified in August 2018, which have posed serious threats to online expression and have enabled widespread government surveillance, which could be used to crack down on online political discourse;
- O. whereas the electoral process is tightly controlled, presidential candidates have withdrawn or have been arrested, and credible opposition parties are offered no significant space to function effectively, which has led to a situation where it is nearly impossible for the opposition in Egypt to gain power through elections;
- P. whereas numerous attacks by Islamist organisations, including local Da'esh affiliated groups, have targeted Christians and their places of worship, injuring and killing hundreds; whereas Coptic Pope Tawadros II has called the attacks against Egypt's Christians as an attack on Egyptian Unity;
- Q. whereas Egypt's Christian community faces harassment and assault from some fellow Egyptians, which include violent attacks against persons and damage to their property; whereas public rhetoric on the importance of religious tolerance has positively increased over recent years; whereas in June 2019, President Sisi has called on Muslim Egyptians to be understanding of Christians in Egypt and congratulate them on the opening of their churches;

1. Supports the aspirations of the majority of the 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; reminds the Egyptian authorities that their freedom of expression and assembly must be guaranteed;
2. Supports the Egyptian government and the Egyptian people in addressing the country's economic, political and security challenges, and reminds the Egyptian authorities that these must be met in full respect of human rights, fundamental freedoms and international law;
3. 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 reaffirms its offer to grant support in addressing the various issues;
4. Strongly condemns the deliberate misinformation campaigns about the protests in Egypt and the exploitation of feelings of discontent which may live amongst certain segments of society in their favour; deplores the use of bot accounts on social media by pro-Da'esh and other Islamist groups;
5. Expresses grave concern about 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;
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 the freedom of association;
7. Strongly urges the Egyptian authorities to ensure that all detained human rights defenders are afforded every right to due process and face a fair, impartial and public trial in accordance with Egypt's obligations under international human rights law;
8. Expresses concern that the use of the death penalty in Egypt has climbed sharply since President Sisi came to power and calls the Egyptian authorities to review its use of the death penalty;
9. Stresses the importance to guarantee the equality of all Egyptians, regardless of their faith or belief; calls on Egypt to review its blasphemy laws to ensure the protection of religious minority from this law;

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