



Plenary sitting

B9-0242/2019

17.12.2019

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 Afghanistan, notably the allegations of sexual abuse on boys in Logar Province
(2019/2981(RSP))

Karol Karski, Anna Fotyga, Ruža Tomašić, Assita Kanko, Charlie Weimers, Angel Dzhambazki, Andrey Slabakov, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Veronika Vrecionová, Alexandr Vondra, Valdemar Tomaševski
on behalf of the ECR Group

B9-0242/2019

European Parliament resolution on Afghanistan, notably the allegations of sexual abuse on boys in Logar Province (2019/2981(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Afghanistan,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, to which Afghanistan is a party,
 - having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child,
 - having regard to the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders,
 - having regarding to the Statement from the Group of Friends of Children and Armed Conflict regarding allegations of sexual abuse of boys in Logar province and subsequent actions against human rights defenders of 3 December 2019
 - having regard to the Council’s conclusions on Afghanistan of 8 April 2019,
 - having regard to the European Asylum Support Office’s report on Afghanistan of June 2019,
 - having regard to the Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development (CAPD) between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, of the other part, signed on 18 February 2017,
 - having regard to the report of the UN Secretary-General of 10 September 2018 entitled ‘the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security’,
 - having regard to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- a) whereas the abuse of young boys is deemed an outcome of the practice of ‘bacha bazi’ or ‘boy play’, an Afghan customs that involves boys as young as nine being forced to dress as women and dance seductively for an audience of older men;
- b) whereas these young boys area typically sold by their poor families and then owned by wealthy patrons where they become the regular victims of sexual assault and abuse, including but not limited to: internal hemorrhaging, protrusion of intestines, throat inquiries, heavy internal bleeding, broken limbs, fractures, broken teeth, strangulation and in some cases, death;

- c) whereas the leadership of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission has called ‘bacha bazi’ shameful and claims that perpetrators are often protected by the police due to their power and status within the country;
 - d) whereas in January 2017, the Afghan government belatedly moved to criminalize ‘bacha bazi’ and is only recently beginning to prevent abuse and protect victims, with mixed success so far;
 - e) whereas Mosa Mahmoodi and Ehsanullah Hamidi, two human rights defenders in Logar were detained by Afghanistan’s National Directorate of Security (NDS) on the 21st of November while they were on their way to visit the EU Ambassador to Afghanistan;
 - f) whereas the two human rights defenders were detained after having exposed an alleged pedophile ring operating in the country’s schools;
 - g) whereas their detention is believed to be illegal and has sparked anger and tensions at national and international levels, leading the US and German Embassies in Kabul to ask for the immediate release of Mr. Mahmoodi and Mr. Hamidi;
 - h) whereas on November 27th the NDS handed over the two men to the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission;
 - i) whereas the Attorney General’s Office has been asked to launch a prompt, independent and impartial investigation into: allegations of sexual abuse and violence against boys in Logar, NDS detainment and treatment of the two human rights activists, and the ongoing threats against civil society activists;
 - j) whereas the Afghan government has been asked to take immediate measures in Logar to ensure the protection of the boys who were alleged to have been abused, including the temporary removal from their positions as teachers or principals;
 - k) whereas at least 546 boys from six schools were allegedly abused;
 - l) whereas the Afghan government, pending the outcome of the AGO’s investigation, has been called upon to provide victims and their families with the necessary services such as psychological and social support and shelter;
1. Strongly condemns the practice of ‘bacha bazi’ and utterly deplores the practice of pedophilia;
 2. Urges the Afghan government and law enforcement to uphold the outlawing of ‘bacha bazi’ and to take all means necessary to intervene preemptively and preventively to ensure the protection of victims and prosecute the perpetrators;
 3. Calls on Afghanistan to guarantee the safety and wellbeing of human rights activists in custody and to pursue full investigations into reports of torture;

4. Calls on Afghanistan to immediately and unconditionally release all human rights defenders, prisoners of conscience and journalists detained and sentenced merely for exercising their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly;
5. Reiterates that if the Afghan government seeks to strengthen its relationship with the EU, then it should abide by the appropriate standards of behaviour and uphold human rights;
6. Recalls that Member States are particularly focused on improving the conditions of women, children, poor and disabled persons and that these groups are in special need of assistance, including in the areas of health and education;
7. Welcomes the fact that the EU-Afghanistan CAPD proposes dialogues on human rights issues, including the rights of women and children;
8. Calls on Afghanistan to cooperate with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan with a particular emphasis on supporting the victims of ‘bacha bazi’;
9. Remains committed to supporting the Afghan Government in its efforts to build a secure and stable future for the people of Afghanistan by undertaking key reforms in order to further improve governance and the rule of law, to build legitimate, democratic institutions, to promote the respect of human rights, including women’s and minor’s rights, to fight corruption, to counter narcotics, to improve fiscal sustainability and to foster inclusive economic growth;
10. Underscores that the long-term development of Afghanistan will depend on accountability of governance, the sustainable provision of human security, the protection of fundamental freedoms and human rights;
11. Is concerned by the fragility of the central government and the lack of control it exerts in some provinces;
12. Calls for the EU to continue its phasing-out plan following the closure of the EUPOL mission, which includes ensuring a sustainable transition of activities to EUPOL’s local and international partners; urges all parties to continue their efforts to strengthen all law enforcement institutions, with a particular focus on the judicial and penitential systems;
13. 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 of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and the Members of the Afghan parliament.