

P7_TA-PROV(2013)0379

Situation in Egypt

European Parliament resolution of 12 September 2013 on the situation in Egypt (2013/2820(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Egypt,
- having regard to its resolution of 23 May 2013 on asset recovery to Arab Spring countries in transition¹,
- having regard to the European Council conclusions on the Arab Spring of 8 February 2013,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 21 August and 22 July 2013 on Egypt,
- having regard to the joint statement of 18 August 2013 on Egypt by the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, and the President of the Commission, José Manuel Barroso,
- having regard to the remarks by High Representative Catherine Ashton following the extraordinary meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council on Egypt of 21 August 2013, the statements of the High Representative on the situation and developments in Egypt of August and July 2013, and the joint statement of 7 August 2013 on Egypt by the High Representative and the US Secretary of State, John Kerry,
- having regard to the EU-Egypt Association Agreement of 2001, which entered into force in 2004, strengthened by the Action Plan of 2007, and to the Commission's progress report on its implementation of 20 March 2013,
- having regard to the Co-Chairs' conclusions of the EU-Egypt Task Force meeting of 14 November 2012,
- having regard to the report of the European Court of Auditors on 'EU cooperation with Egypt in the field of governance', published on 18 June 2013,
- 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 Egypt is a party,
- having regard to the Constitutional Declaration issued in Egypt on 8 July 2013, proposing a roadmap for constitutional amendments and new elections,
- having regard to the 'Programme to Sustain the Path to Democracy' of the Egyptian interim government,
- having regard to Rule 110(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0224.

- A. whereas Egypt is the largest Arab country, a pivotal country in the southern Mediterranean, an important trade partner of the EU and a major recipient of EU aid; whereas political, economic and social developments in Egypt have significant implications in the whole region and beyond;
- B. whereas the failure of President Morsi and his government to deliver on economic promises, to take into account the legitimate concerns of all democratic forces of Egyptian society and to implement the democratic transition called for by the population for the last two years led to increasing political polarisation, mass demonstrations calling on President Morsi to resign and violent clashes;
- C. whereas on 30 June 2013 millions of President Morsi's opponents massed in Cairo and in other Egyptian cities calling on him to step down; whereas, following these demonstrations, on 3 July 2013, the head of the armed forces, General Abdul Fattah al-Sisi, led a military takeover which deposed President Morsi and his government; whereas in its statement of 4 July 2013 the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces announced the suspension of the Constitution, the transfer of power to the head of the High Constitutional Court until early presidential elections were held, to be followed by parliamentary elections, and the forming of a national coalition government and a committee to look into amendments to the Constitution; whereas Mr Adly Mansour was sworn in as interim President;
- D. whereas the interim President dissolved the upper house of Parliament, announced a roadmap over a nine-month transition period, during which the 2012 Constitution would be amended and adopted by referendum, followed by parliamentary and presidential elections, and appointed an acting Prime Minister; whereas Egypt's highest Islamic and Christian Coptic authorities, prominent liberal politicians, and the Salafist Nour party endorsed the transition roadmap; whereas a new constitutional committee composed of 50 experts was appointed on 1 September 2013 to draft constitutional amendments;
- E. whereas former President Morsi has been detained since 3 July 2013 in an unknown place and has been referred for trial by the country's state prosecutor, together with 14 other persons including leading figures of the Muslim Brotherhood, on charges of incitement to murder and violence; whereas many members of the Muslim Brotherhood have been arrested, including most of its leaders awaiting trial; whereas the former dictator Hosni Mubarak was released from prison on 22 August 2013 and has been under house arrest since;
- F. whereas, since the military intervention, supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood have organised large-scale demonstrations throughout Egypt, demanding the release and reinstatement of former President Morsi; whereas many of the Muslim Brotherhood-organised protests have turned violent and led to deadly clashes between citizens, as well as between Muslim Brotherhood supporters and the army and security forces; whereas, on 14 August 2013, the Egyptian army and police cleared two sit-ins of supporters of former President Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood at the Rabaa intersection and Nahda Square in Cairo, which led to the deaths of hundreds of demonstrators along with dozens of policemen;
- G. whereas the interim government declared a month-long state of emergency and announced that an independent committee composed of public figures would be established to investigate the dispersal of the Rabaa and Nahda Square sit-ins; whereas regional and Egyptian NGOs have called for a fact-finding mission by the Arab League to investigate

recent acts of violence in the country; whereas EU and international mediation has so far failed in its attempts to establish an inclusive political dialogue, and whereas protests, clashes and arrests have continued;

- H. whereas the violent dispersal of the sit-ins was followed by tragic sectarian violence committed against Egyptian Christians, notably by Muslim Brotherhood supporters; whereas the Egyptian security forces were accused of having failed to protect churches and Coptic communities against predictable reprisal attacks;
- I. whereas acts of terrorism and violent attacks against security forces in the Sinai have been increasing, including the killing of 25 off-duty policemen in northern Sinai on 19 August 2013; whereas the Egyptian Interior Minister Mohammed Ibrahim was the target of a bomb attack in Cairo on 5 September 2013;
- J. whereas the interim government has stated that national reconciliation and the rule of law are the highest priorities of its action;
- K. whereas Egypt is facing increasingly serious economic difficulties; whereas economic prosperity in the country requires political stability, sound economic policies, action to fight corruption and international support; whereas social justice and a higher standard of living for citizens are crucial dimensions of the transition towards an open, stable, democratic, free and prosperous Egyptian society;
- L. whereas independent trade unions and civil society organisations have a crucial role to play in this critical period of political and social transition in Egypt; whereas free and independent press and media form a key part of society in any true democracy; whereas physical violence and acts of harassment against journalists have increased in Egypt while, on 3 September 2013, a court in Cairo ordered the closure of four television stations run by or sympathetic to the Muslim Brotherhood, saying that they were operating illegally; whereas the offices of several television channels have been raided by security forces in the past six weeks;
- M. whereas Egyptian women are in a particularly vulnerable situation in the current period of prolonged political crisis; whereas female protestors are often subject to violence, sexual assaults and other forms of degrading treatment, while women's rights activists face threats and harassment;
- N. whereas between 2007 and 2012 Egypt received approximately EUR 1 billion of EU aid and whereas the EU has committed a further EUR 5 billion in aid, which can only become fully available once conditions tied to those set by the IMF are met;
- O. whereas in its conclusions on Egypt of 21 August 2013 the Foreign Affairs Council tasked the High Representative, in cooperation with the Commission, with reviewing the issue of EU assistance to Egypt under the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Association Agreement, on the basis of Egypt's commitment to the principles that underpin them; whereas the Member States decided to suspend export licences to Egypt for any equipment which might be used for internal repression, to reassess export licences for other military equipment, and to review their security assistance to Egypt;
- P. whereas, in line with its reviewed European Neighbourhood Policy and notably the 'more for more' approach, the EU's level and scope of engagement with Egypt is incentive-based

and therefore dependent on progress with regard to the country's respecting its commitments, including on democracy, the rule of law, human rights and gender equality;

1. Expresses its strong solidarity with the Egyptian people and its sincere condolences to the families of victims of recent clashes and violence; calls on the Egyptian authorities to establish a judicial committee to independently investigate all killings, as promised by the Egyptian presidency on 8 July 2013;
2. Condemns the disproportionate use of force by Egyptian security forces and the tragic loss of life during the dismantlement of the Rabaa and Nahda encampments; urges the Government of Egypt to ensure that the security forces establish adequate internal review procedures, so that responsibilities for the excessive use of force can be ascertained and those responsible be brought to justice;
3. Deplores at the same time the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood leadership failed to clearly instruct its political base to refrain from any form of violence against fellow citizens, the army and the police; deplores the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood leadership did not do anything to prevent and stop those attacks and only belatedly condemned them; calls on Muslim Brotherhood leaders to refrain from calling for and glorifying violence and supports legal proceedings against those of their leaders who called for the use of violence;
4. Condemns all acts of terrorism, incitement, violence and hate speech; urges all political actors and security forces to show the utmost restraint and avoid provocation, with the aim of avoiding further violence in the best interests of the country; reminds the interim President, the interim government and the Egyptian army of their obligation to ensure the security of all citizens in the country regardless of their political views and affiliation; expresses deep concern at the reported arrest of dozens of children in relation to the crackdown on Muslim Brotherhood supporters, and calls for their immediate release;
5. Expresses its concerns at the political developments in Egypt; calls on the Egyptian authorities, in order to create the necessary conditions for an inclusive political process, to end the state of emergency as soon as possible, to release all political prisoners, including the ousted former President Morsi, and to treat detainees with full respect for their international obligations;
6. Stresses that power should be transferred to democratically-elected civilian authorities as soon as possible; expresses its fundamental solidarity with all those Egyptians who cherish democratic aspirations and values for their country, and calls for a rapid return to the democratic process, including the holding of free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections in a fully inclusive process with the participation of all democratic actors, and for the necessary economic and governance reforms to be made; urges the Muslim Brotherhood to contribute to reconciliation efforts; believes that any ban, exclusion or prosecution directed against a democratic political force or actor in Egypt would repeat past mistakes and would only lead to increased radicalism;
7. Expresses its support for the process of constitutional drafting and reform, and stresses that this must lay the foundations for a truly democratic new Egypt, guaranteeing fundamental rights and freedoms, including religious freedom, for all citizens – men and women – of Egypt, promoting interreligious tolerance and cohabitation and guaranteeing the protection of minorities as well as the freedoms of association, of assembly and of the media; strongly believes that the consultation process on the constitutional amendments should include all

components of the Egyptian political spectrum, including the moderate components of the Muslim Brotherhood, and an adequate representation of women, and that it should be followed by a referendum on a new, pluralistic constitution and by free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections;

8. Calls for an immediate end to all acts of violence, sexual assault and other forms of degrading treatment against female protesters and women's rights activists, for serious and impartial investigations into all such cases, and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
9. Condemns the violence against the Coptic community and the destruction of a large number of churches, community centres and businesses throughout the country; expresses concern that the authorities failed to take adequate security measures to protect the Coptic community in spite of many warnings; points to the historical pluralism of Egyptian society and the centuries-old tradition of the Egyptian Coptic community; asks the Egyptian Government to support the Coptic community in every possible way, so that the Egyptian Coptic community can continue to be an important part of Egypt's social and economic fabric and that peaceful cohabitation with the other communities of Egypt can quickly be restored;
10. Stresses once more the importance of the contribution of civil society, trade unions and the media to building deep and sustainable democracy in Egypt; calls on the interim government to guarantee that domestic and international civil society organisations, independent trade unions and journalists can operate freely, without government interference, in the country; calls on the Egyptian authorities to ensure that the committee tasked with writing a new NGO law produces a draft which is in line with international standards; supports the decision of the Foreign Affairs Council of 21 August 2013 that, in the light of the negative impact of the economic situation on the most vulnerable groups of Egyptian society, EU assistance in the socio-economic sector and to civil society will continue;
11. Welcomes the recommendation by the Egyptian National Council for Human Rights to the government to open a regional office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Cairo, and urges the Egyptian Government to approve the opening of this office;
12. Urges the Union to take into consideration both the principle of conditionality ('more for more') and the serious economic challenges Egypt is facing in its bilateral relations with and its financial support to the country; calls for clear and jointly agreed benchmarks in this regard; welcomes the recent decision of the Foreign Affairs Council to suspend export licences to Egypt for any equipment which might be used for internal repression, to reassess export licences for other military equipment, and to review security assistance to Egypt;
13. Reconfirms its commitment to assist the Egyptian people in the process towards democratic and economic reform; welcomes and supports the efforts of Vice-President / High Representative Catherine Ashton and Special Representative Bernardino León to mediate between the parties with the aim of brokering a way out of the current political crisis;
14. Takes note of the findings of the special report of the European Court of Auditors of 18 June 2013 on 'EU cooperation with Egypt in the field of governance', and calls for action to ensure greater transparency and accountability concerning the way EU funding is spent in Egypt, with special regard to projects fostering civil society and protecting minorities and

women's rights;

15. Reiterates its call for the establishment without delay of an EU mechanism to provide legal and technical assistance to Arab Spring countries in the process of asset recovery, as mentioned in its resolution of 23 May 2013 but delayed because of the turmoil in Egypt; stresses once more that facilitating the return of assets stolen by former dictators and their regimes is a moral imperative for the EU; believes that asset recovery is a highly political issue by reason of its symbolic value and can make a major contribution to restoring accountability, creating stability and building solid institutions in the spirit of democracy and the rule of law in the partner countries concerned;
16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt.