

Texts adopted

Human trafficking in Sinai, in particular the case of Solomon W.

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►European Parliament resolution of 15 March 2012 on human trafficking in Sinai, in particular the case of Solomon W. (2012/2569(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 16 December 2010 on Eritrean refugees held hostage in the Sinai⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially Article 3 (‘Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person’), Article 4, prohibiting the slave trade in all its forms, and Article 5 thereof,
- having regard to Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights of 1950,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, especially Articles 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 thereof,
- having regard to the first Conference of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network of 26-27 January 2006 in Cairo,
- having regard to the 2000 UN Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, especially Articles 6 and 9 thereof,
- having regard to the Brussels Declaration on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, adopted on 20 September 2002,
- having regard to Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings of 2005,
- having regard to Article 2, Article 6.1, Article 7, and Article 17 (‘Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks’) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
- having regard to the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 protocol thereto,
- having regard to the declaration of 21 September 2010 by Catherine Ashton, Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, on political prisoners in Eritrea,
- having regard to Rule 122(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. whereas thousands of asylum seekers and migrants lose their lives and disappear in Sinai every year while others, including many women and children, are kidnapped and held hostage for ransom by human traffickers; whereas victims of human traffickers are abused in the most dehumanising manner and are subject to systemic violence and torture, rape and sexual abuse, and forced labour;
- B. whereas in December 2011 several individuals were kidnapped outside a UN refugee camp in Sudan by human traffickers of the Rashaida tribe; whereas 27 of them, including four girls and a woman with a small child, were Eritrean and were brought to Rafah in the Sinai Mahadya in Egypt;
- C. whereas within the group women, in particular, were battered and mistreated and some of them were killed and their bodies were thrown into the desert and only Solomon, an Eritrean man of 25 years, has escaped from the hands of his kidnappers;
- D. whereas Solomon had been spared from bringing water to 125 more prisoners from Eritrea, Sudan and Ethiopia who were imprisoned in houses and stables in the village of Al Mahdya, and Solomon knows exactly where the prisoners are kept and he also witnessed the murders, tortures and rapes;
- E. whereas the Eritrean young man revealed that one of the jailers showed him a plastic bag containing human organs of a refugee who did not pay the ransom;
- F. whereas the life of Solomon is in danger, as the human organ traffickers are in close pursuit of him and have put a price of USD 50 000 on his head and, for the moment, Solomon is protected by the Salafist Bedouins of Sheikh Mohamed;
- G. whereas reportedly an average of 2 000 people enter Israel through Sinai each month, many of them have done so with the assistance of smugglers who have established a sizable network in this area; whereas, according to Israeli government estimates, around 50 000 Africans have illegally entered Israel through Sinai since 2005;
- H. whereas police arrested hundreds of irregular migrants, primarily Eritreans, Ethiopians, and Sudanese, and detained them in police stations and prisons in Sinai and Upper Egypt without access to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, thereby denying them the right to make an asylum claim;
- I. whereas, according to human rights organisations, those who fail to pay the price for their release are killed and have their organs removed and traded; whereas there are reports of mass graves of killed refugees;
- J. whereas the EU has repeatedly invited Egypt and Israel to develop and improve the quality of the assistance and protection offered to asylum seekers and refugees residing or transiting on their territory;
- K. whereas the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children defines trafficking in persons as ‘the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use

of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation’;

L. whereas trafficking in human beings is an extremely profitable business for organised crime;

1. Urges the Egyptian authorities to rapidly intervene in order to provide effective protection and secure the life of Solomon, given that the human organ traffickers are in close pursuit of him and have put a price of USD 50 000 on the fact that he knows exactly where the prisoners are kept;
2. Calls on the Egyptian authorities to protect Solomon as a victim of trafficking in persons, and all victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, from becoming a victim again;
3. Urges the Egyptian authorities to investigate this case full of murders, tortures and rapes, where women were battered and mistreated and some of them were killed and their bodies were thrown into the desert, applying the national and international law against this type of organised crime concerning human trafficking;
4. Urges the Egyptian authorities to rapidly intervene in order to ensure that these refugees are rescued and to take appropriate measures in proceeding with the arrest and prosecution of members of trafficking syndicates;
5. Calls on the Egyptian authorities to fully implement, through its national legislation, the principles of the Conventions to which Egypt is party, i.e. the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (and its optional 1967 Protocol), the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrants Workers and Members of their Family, which it ratified in 1993 and which subsequently entered into force in 2003;
6. Urges the Egyptian authorities to take all necessary measures to stop the torture, extortion and human trafficking of Eritrean refugees and other refugees in the country, and to prosecute those who attempt to violate refugees' human rights and those who practise any form of slavery, with special regard to women and children;
7. Applauds the activities of Egyptian and Israeli human rights organisations, which provide assistance and medical treatment to victims of human traffickers in Sinai, and urges the international community and the EU to support their work;
8. Acknowledges that irregular migrants in Sinai pose a security risk for Egypt and Israel; however, again urges Egyptian and Israeli security forces to avoid the use of lethal force against illegal migrants;
9. Stresses the responsibility of Egyptian and Israeli authorities to stop the human traffickers in Sinai as well as to protect the victims; welcomes the efforts of the

Egyptian and Israeli governments in this regard; calls, however, for more assistance and support for the victims, with special regard to women and children;

10. Welcomes Egypt's efforts in combating human trafficking, especially the establishment of the National Coordinating Committee for combating and preventing trafficking in persons in 2007, and calls on the Egyptian authorities to implement the 2010 anti-trafficking law and to undertake measures such as research, information and mass media campaigns and social and economic initiatives to prevent and combat trafficking in persons;

11. Urges Egypt, Israel and the international community to continue and further intensify their efforts to combat human smuggling and trafficking in Sinai;

12. Calls for full access of UN agencies and human rights organisations to the areas affected by human smuggling and trafficking in Sinai;

13. Calls on the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commission to put this topic as a matter of high priority on the agenda of political dialogue with Egypt and to urge its government to combat human trafficking and to uphold its obligations under international refugee conventions, with a view to promoting international cooperation on taking action against trafficking in human beings;

14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the High Representative / Vice-President, the Council and the Commission, to the governments and parliaments of the Member States, to the Egyptian and the Israeli governments, to the Egyptian Parliament and the Israeli Knesset, and to the UN Secretary General and the UN Human Rights Council.