



Plenary sitting

B8-0429/2017

13.6.2017

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 Pakistan, notably the situation of human rights defenders and the death penalty
(2017/2723(RSP))

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on behalf of the PPE Group

**European Parliament resolution on Pakistan, notably the situation of human rights defenders and the death penalty
(2017/2723(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Pakistan,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on Pakistan of 18 July 2016,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
 - having regard to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion and Belief,
 - having regard to the EU-Pakistan Five Year Engagement Plan, which contains priorities such as good governance and dialogue on human rights,
 - having regard to the EU-Pakistan Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2014–2020,
 - having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas State agents have subjected human rights defenders exercising their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly to excessive force and even prosecution under Pakistan’s counter-terrorism laws; whereas others have been assaulted, killed or forcibly disappeared; whereas not a single perpetrator has been successfully brought to justice;
- B. whereas Pakistan has attempted to shut down NGOs for reasons such as the NGO “presenting a very bleak picture of human rights”;
- C. whereas, after the school massacre by Taliban insurgents in December 2014, the Government of Pakistan reintroduced the death penalty after a six-year moratorium, first only for terrorist activities but later for all capital crimes;
- D. whereas on April 14 2017 Mashal Khan, a student at Abdul Wali Khan University, was lynched by a mob of fellow students, after having been accused of publishing blasphemous material online; whereby this represented the first recorded ‘blasphemy killing’ in a Pakistani university; whereas the Parliament of Pakistan adopted unanimously a resolution condemning his killing;
- E. whereas about €97 million has been allocated through the MIP to bolster democracy in Pakistan; whereas a specific objective is to improve security and the rule of law, protecting people’s human rights, making law enforcement, legal and judicial systems more accountable;

- F. whereas Pakistan entered the GSP+ scheme for the first time on 1 January 2014; whereas this scheme 'should provide a strong incentive to respect core human and labour rights;
- G. whereas Christians and other minorities face not only persecution by extremists, but also legal discrimination, in particular through Pakistan's blasphemy laws, which are discriminatory and are widely misused by those with personal and political motives; whereas Muslims themselves continue to be charged under these laws;
- H. whereas Pakistan plays an important role in fostering stability in South Asia and could be expected to lead by example in strengthening the rule of law and human rights;
- I. whereas 12 million women do not have National Identity Cards, which means that they are not registered for elections;
1. Is seriously concerned with regard to the situation of human rights in Pakistan; welcomes Pakistan's adoption of a Human Rights Action Plan and its decision to strengthen its Human Rights Institutions; calls for these to be translated into tangible progress in terms of respecting, protecting and promoting all human rights, as well as through strengthening the rule of law;
 2. Strongly condemns the use of force against human rights defenders, and their prosecution; strongly condemns attempts to shut down NGOs;
 3. Calls on the Government of Pakistan to cease judicial harassment of human rights defenders and ensure that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities free from arbitrary arrest and judicial harassment; regrets that perpetrators of attacks against human rights defenders have not been brought to justice;
 4. Recalls its consistent opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances; is deeply concerned by Pakistan's decision to lift the moratorium on executions and the fact that executions continue at an alarming pace; calls on the Government of Pakistan to reinstate the moratorium as a first step towards the abolition of the death penalty;
 5. Expresses deep concern at the systemic and grave violations of freedom of religion and belief in Pakistan; stresses the importance of respect for the fundamental rights of all religious and ethnic minorities living in Pakistan;
 6. Is concerned at the continued use of blasphemy laws in Pakistan and believes that this is heightening the climate of religious intolerance; calls, therefore, on the Government of Pakistan to review these laws and their application; calls for protection of judges, defence counsel and defense witnesses in all so-called blasphemy cases;
 7. Stresses that Pakistan's counter-terrorism laws and policies disregard human rights protections, including in the practice of enforced disappearances of terrorism suspects and others, and in the exposure of civilians accused of terrorism-related offences to unfair, secret and opaque trials in military courts;
 8. Notes with concern that 12 million women do not have National Identity Cards, and that they are therefore not registered for elections;

9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the European Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and the Government and Parliament of Pakistan.