

MOTION FOR RESOLUTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN EGYPT

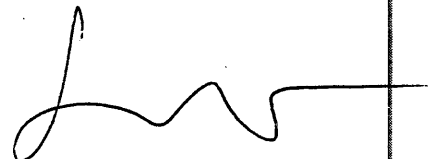
Tabled by Alima Boumediene-Thiery and Helene Flautre
On behalf of the Green/EFA group in the EP

BS-219/03

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on human rights in Egypt, with regard in particular to the ones of 14 June 2001, 4 July 2002 and 5 September 2002,
 - having regard to its resolution of 29 November 2001 on the conclusion of an association agreement with Egypt,
 - having regard to Article 2 of the EU-Egypt Euro-Mediterranean Agreement, now open for ratification by the parties,
 - having regard to the fact that in November 2002 the UN Committee for Human Rights issued several recommendations after having examined Egypt's periodic report of its implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, including that Egypt should 'refrain from sanctioning private sexual relations between consenting adults'
- A. whereas the new trial for 50 of the 52 men arrested at a Cairo gay night-club on a Nile riverboat last year has sentenced on 15 March 2003 21 persons to three years' imprisonment and forced labour, while 29 were acquitted,
- B. whereas the new sentences are generally harsher, since sentences for those who had originally been convicted were extended on appeal to three years, the maximum sentence allowed under Egyptian law,
- C. whereas during the last months the Egyptian police has arrested a high number of people suspected of being homosexuals accusing them of debauchery in spite of the fact that Egyptian law does not penalise homosexuality as a criminal offence,
- D. stressing that scores of people have been arrested and remain in detention on the base of Egypt's state of emergency law after mass anti-war demonstrations which took place in Cairo on 20 and 21 March,
- E. pointing out that in such demonstrations police and security forces responded with excessive force beating large numbers of people, causing many to be injured and also invading and occupying Lawyers' Syndicate,
- F. whereas 68 detainees have been seen by a prosecutor and have been charged with a variety of offences including participation in illegal gatherings, threatening public security, destruction of public property, blocking traffic and transmitting propaganda that could disturb public safety and harm public interests,
- G. considering that 64 protesters have been subsequently released including two lawmakers who were arrested despite their parliamentary immunity,

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1. Stresses that the respect for human rights including freedom of information, speech and association are fundamental values which are enshrined in the EU/Egypt Association Agreement and constitute the basis of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership;
 2. Calls on the Egyptian authorities to call for a halt to all prosecutions of citizens on grounds of homosexuality and to protect their individual freedoms and insists that particular attention be paid to prohibiting discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation;
 3. Urges Egyptian authorities to put an end to all forms of harassment against demonstrators and activists who are exercising their legitimate right to collective peaceful expression, to cease immediately the use of torture against detainees and to ensure that those being held, including those incommunicado, are provided proper legal protections;
 4. Underlines the fact that Article 2 of the Association Agreement includes a clause demanding that human rights and democratic principles be respected, but believes that much more effort and attention is needed to ensure that these are upheld in practice;
 5. Urges the Council and the Commission, in this respect, to develop and strengthen democracy programmes for Egypt in the framework of the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights with a view to supporting the Egyptian civil society;
 6. Welcomes the decision of the Egyptian Court of Cassation to overthrow the verdict of State Security Court and acquit human-rights activist Saad Eddin Ibrahim ;
 7. Urges the Egyptian authorities to stop making use of decades-old emergency laws and to reform the judiciary dismantling or clearly limiting the competences of State Security, State Security Emergency and Military Courts;
 8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Government and Parliament of Egypt.
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