

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

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*Session document*

13.11.2007

B6-0455/2007

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

with request for inclusion in the agenda for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 115 of the Rules of Procedure

by Cristiana Muscardini, Mario Borghezio, Adam Bielan, Ryszard Czarnecki, Hanna Foltyn-Kubicka, Marcin Libicki, Ewa Tomaszewska

on behalf of the UEN Group

on Serious events which compromise the existence of Christian communities, in the Middle East

**European Parliament resolution on Serious events which compromise the existence of Christian communities, in the Middle East**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its resolution of 24 February 2005 on the EU's priorities and recommendations for the 61st session of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva,
  - having regard to its resolution of 28 April 2005 on the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2004 and the EU's policy on the matter,
  - having regard to its resolution of 6 July 2005 on the European Union and Iraq – A framework for engagement,
  - having regard to its resolution of 6 April 2006 on Iraq: the Assyrian community; the situation in Iraqi prisons,
  - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas in some countries in the Middle East Christians have been the target of serious attacks and in some cases assassination attempts and killings,
- B. whereas the murder in Gaza of Rami Khader Ayyad is only the latest signs of hidden processes taking place in Palestine, in the Lebanon and in other areas of the region, where Christian communities, subjected to ostracism, are decreasing with a consequent risk of extinction,
- C. concerned at the recent violent events in Iraq, among others: the kidnapping of two catholic priests on 14 October 2007 in Mosul, Fathers Pius Afas and Mazen Ishaq; the assassination of two assyrian christians members of the organisation National Union of Bet-Nahrin on 28 June 2007 in Mosul, Zuhair Youssef Astavo Kermles and Luay Solomon Numan; the murder of a caldean priest on 3 June 2007 in Mosul, P. Ragheed Ganni, and of three diacons who were his aides,
- D. whereas such events and crimes against the Christian communities are not limited to the Middle East area but have been recently occurred in other Muslim states, such as Pakistan, Egypt and Turkey,

- E. whereas such facts if they are not stopped can lead to a strong erosion of the Christian presence in places of historical experiences of old Christian tradition, and change the religious geography of these places that have preserved for centuries, in spite of everything, an effective internal pluralism,
- F. whereas the responsibilities of the governments and political leaders are evident because they have not addressed the problem of murders and persecutions,
- G. whereas in Lebanon the drastic decrease in the number of Christians, who represent by now less than half the population of the country, seems the spontaneous result of the decline in national sovereignty; whereas in Iraq the assassination attempts are blamed on an endless post-war situation,
- H. whereas on May 10 2007 the European Parliament adopted a report where, for the first time, it recognised the respect of the principle of reciprocity as an essential condition for the advancement of relations between the EU and Arab countries,
- I. whereas in its resolution of 25 October 2007 on Iran it invites the Iranian authorities to abide by the international covenants and agreements concerning the protection of religious minorities, and condemns the current lack of respect for the rights of such minorities,
- J. whereas the exodus of Christians from Iraq is cause for serious concern, underlined by the fact that in 2006 on a total of 38.000 Iraqis registered by the UNHCR in Syria, about 24% was Christian and whereas the internal displacement of people within Iraq concerns more than two million persons, a large majority of whom belong to Christian minorities, who mainly move to the Nineveh plains,
- K. whereas no heads of government, no community institutions or political movements have made any efforts, nor have any proposals been put forward or any observatories been set up to ensure the protection of the many Christians that pay with their lives their commitment and loyalty in testifying their faith; whereas an example of this indifference is given by the silence on the occasion of father Giancarlo Bossi's kidnapping in the Philippines,
- L. whereas religious freedom is the key for ensuring the respect of all the other freedoms and human rights; whereas the persecution of Christians in the world represents one of the most ferocious contemporary challenges against human dignity,
1. Strongly condemns all acts of violence against the Christian communities in some countries in the Middle East; urges the governments of the countries concerned to identify and bring to justice the perpetrators of these serious crimes as soon as possible;
  2. Is seriously shocked in particular by the barbarian assassination of Rami Khader Ayyad occurred in Gaza on October 6 by Islamic gunmen who accused him of spreading Christianity in the Arab world;
  3. Takes note of the positive reaction of Prime Minister Ismail Haniya who condemned in

a statement, following the murder, the killing of Ayyad and confirmed his willingness to fight all people who want to sabotage Muslim Christian relations;

4. Is concerned, however, by the presence of some groups in the area - such as Jihadia Salafija - which promised to insist in such attacks if missionary activity continues to take place;
5. Urges the governments of the countries concerned, including Hamas in Gaza, to protect the Christian communities from discrimination under the international treaties and agreements that they have ratified and improve the security situation of the Christian communities;
6. Calls on the Commission and the Council to take all necessary diplomatic and other measures in order to assist and protect the Christian communities in the countries where they are in trouble, through the promotion of multilateral meetings in order to suggest immediate safeguard measures, or through the request of a strategic commitment from the countries concerned on the basis of the international treaties on human rights;
7. Calls on the Commission and the Council to pay particular attention to the position of religious minorities when allocating aid to the regions concerned;
8. Recommends a report be drawn up by its competent committee on the situation of Christian communities in the Middle East;
9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Middle East countries concerned and the UN Secretary General.