



23.11.2010

B7-0648/2010

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 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on Iraq, in particular the death penalty (including the case of Tariq Aziz) and attacks against Christian communities

José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Elmar Brok, Constance Le Grip, Mario Mauro, Esther de Lange, Cristian Dan Preda, Bernd Posselt, Laima Liucija Andrikienė, Filip Kaczmarek, Lena Kolarska-Bobińska, Eija-Riitta Korhola, Monica Luisa Macovei, Elena Băsescu, Tunne Kelam, Elisabeth Jeggle, Cristiana Muscardini, Bogusław Sonik, Thomas Mann, Sari Essayah, Csaba Sógor, Martin Kastler
on behalf of the PPE Group

European Parliament resolution on José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Elmar Brok, Constance Le Grip, Mario Mauro, Esther de Lange, Cristian Dan Preda, Bernd Posselt, Laima Liucija Andrikienė, Filip Kaczmarek, Lena Kolarska-Bobińska, Eija-Riitta Korhola, Monica Luisa Macovei, Elena Băsescu, Tunne Kelam, Elisabeth Jeggle, Cristiana Muscardini, Bogusław Sonik, Thomas Mann, Sari Essayah, Csaba Sógor, Martin Kastler

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 the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion and Belief of 1981,
- 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 its resolution of 15 November 2007 on serious events which compromise Christian communities' existence and those of other religious communities,
- having regard to its annual reports on the situation of human rights in the world and its previous resolutions on religious minorities in the world,
- having regard to Rule 122 of its Rules of Procedure,

On the death penalty (including the case of Tariq Aziz)

- A. Whereas on 26 October 2010 an Iraqi court in Baghdad imposed the death penalty on the former Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz and two other former officials;

On the attacks against Christian communities

- B. Whereas the series of anti-Christian bombings has killed at least four people and wounded 19 on 10 November 2010 following the bloodbath at a Baghdad church on 31 October 2010 in which 58 people died;

- C. Whereas an Iraqi defence ministry official said attackers had launched 13 bombs and two mortar attacks on Christian homes and shops since Tuesday 9 November 2010;
- D. Whereas the "Islamic State of Iraq", an umbrella group linked to Al Qaeda, claimed responsibility for the cathedral attack, saying it wanted to force the release of converts to Islam allegedly being detained by the Coptic Church in Egypt;
- E. Whereas the other violent events in Iraq in 2007: 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 Chaldean priest on 3 June 2007 in Mosul, P. Ragheed Ganni, and of three deacons who were his aides,
- F. Whereas an estimated 800,000 Christians lived in Iraq in 2003 but that number reduced to around 500,000 in the face of repeated attacks against their community and churches;
- G. Whereas the growing violence comes in the middle of a months-long power vacuum in Iraq which has yet to form a new government following disputed March elections;
- H. Whereas other additional attacks against innocent civilians throughout Iraq, to include pilgrims in the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala;
- I. Whereas the existing instability doesn't permit police and military to provide effective protection to the Christian community despite the increase of security measures at churches around Baghdad;
- L. Whereas these attacks are not targeting only Christians, but also the government that has promised to protect the Christians;
- M. Whereas on 10 May 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;
- N. Whereas archbishop Louis Sako from Kirkuk during a visit in Poland in November asked for support for prosecuted Christians in Iraq;

On the death penalty (including the case of Tariq Aziz)

1. Welcomes Iraq's president, Jalal Talabani's statement on Wednesday 17 November 2010 that he will not sign the order regarding the hanging of Tariq Aziz, joining the Vatican and others in objecting to the death sentence;
2. Calls on the Iraqi authorities not to execute former Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz and two other former officials sentenced to death by a Baghdad court;

On the attacks against Christian communities

3. Expresses its deep concern about the recent attacks against Christians in Iraq and its solidarity with the families of the victims;
4. Calls on the Iraqi Authorities to ensure the personal safety and integrity of the Christian minority in the country;
5. Calls on the Iraqi political parties to find a satisfactory agreement and to form the government in order to make the situation more stable and safe for all the Iraqi population;
6. Calls on the Iraqi political forces represented in the Council of the Representatives and to the incoming new Iraqi government to guarantee that cultural, social and political rights of the Christian communities must be respected, in a secure living environment and to prevent any discrimination against them;
7. Calls on the Council and the Commission, in particular the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, in view of the preparation of the first Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between EU and Iraq, to address the problem of Christians' safety within Iraqi borders as a priority issue;
8. Strongly condemns all acts of violence against Churches and all places of worship and urges the European Union and the International Community to strengthen the fight against the terrorism;
9. Welcomes the statement of the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 2 November 2010 to call to the specialised authorities and all security forces to stand firmly against any attempts to separate Iraqi citizens on sectarian and racial basis and to provide protection for Iraqi citizens and to guarantee the religious practice;
10. Calls the International Community to lead a fact finding mission to evaluate the damages suffered by the Iraqi Christians Communities in order to support a prompt reconstruction and help the Communities to go back to their normal life within more secure boundaries of Iraq;
11. Calls on the EU and the Member States to support the Iraqi Christians refugees giving them safe shelters, whilst the goal is to let them finally to be able to go back to their own country - as soon as possible - by granting them security and freedom -including full return of property and belongings - by the Iraqi's Authority;
12. Ask the EU to promote a International Conference in Iraq with the aim to support the Dialogue among the different religious Communities of the country and by doing so, to underline clearly that the International Community do not leave alone the Christians in the Middle East region;

13. Ask the EU to designate the 31 October a European Memorial Day to commemorate the victims of the persecution of religious minorities;
14. Calls on all religious authorities to promote tolerance and to take initiatives against hatred and violent and extremist radicalisation;
15. Strongly supports any initiative to promote dialogue and mutual respect between religions;
16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, to the Governments and the Parliaments of the Member States, the Iraqi authorities, the UN Secretary General and the UN Human Rights Council.