



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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B7-0719/2010

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 Eritrean refugees held hostage in Sinai

**Charles Tannock, Michał Tomasz Kamiński, Tomasz Piotr Poręba,
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on behalf of the ECR Group

European Parliament resolution on Eritrean refugees held hostage in Sinai

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Egypt, in particular of 19 January 2006 on Egypt: Violence against Sudanese refugees,
 - having regard to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, ratified by Egypt in 2004,
 - having regard to the EU-Egypt Association Agreement¹ signed in Luxembourg on 25 June 2001 and in force since 1 June 2004, and in particular the Preamble and Article 2 thereof,
 - having regard to the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 28 July 1951 and the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials,
 - having regard to the Barcelona Declaration of 28 November 1995, which formed the basis of what became the Union for the Mediterranean,
 - having regard to Article 3(5) and 21 of the Treaty on European Union,
 - having regard to the statement by the UNHCR spokesperson on 7 December 2010,
 - having regard to Rule 122 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the media has reported that hundreds of asylum seekers and migrants from Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia and possibly other countries have been held at a location in Egypt near the Israeli border since late October by Bedouin people-traffickers and that in late November and early December 2010, traffickers shot or beat to death six Eritrean nationals who were among the group,
- B. whereas this group of asylum seekers and migrants are forced to make additional payments above the agreed prize for smuggling them into Israel; whereas the asylum seekers and migrants are subject to extortion, torture, physical and mental abuse, including incarceration, whipping, beating, rape and even murder and whereas in addition many are forced to work for the human traffickers under inhumane conditions,
- C. whereas a sizable network smuggling sub-Saharan migrants through Egypt to Israel has been operating in Sinai since at least 2007, whereas there are also human traffickers operating in Sinai who abuse the migrants under their control and hold them for ransom,
- D. whereas Egypt's security forces regularly arrest asylum seekers and migrants, for example on 8 December 2010, when according to security sources Egyptian police arrested 83

¹ OJ L 304, 30.9.2004, p. 39.

asylum seekers and migrants - 63 Ethiopians and 20 Eritreans - 10 kilometers outside the town of Suez, whereas since July 2007 Egyptian border guards have also shot and killed at least 85 people trying to cross into Israel, including some who appear to have been seeking asylum,

- E. whereas the Egyptian authorities do not allow the United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) access to asylum seekers and migrants arrested in Sinai and do not attempt to identify potential trafficking victims among them,
 - F. whereas Egypt's penal code, its 2008 Child Law, and its Organ Transplant Law all criminalize trafficking,
 - G. whereas according to the UNHCR, about 85 percent of the migrants entering Israel through the Sinai desert in recent months have been Eritrean nationals fleeing an extremely repressive state,
1. Calls on the Egyptian authorities to immediately rescue migrants held for ransom and abused by human traffickers in the Sinai and to take immediate and effective steps to combat trafficking and smuggling in the Sinai;
 2. Calls on the European Commission to assist in the fight against the scourge of human trafficking in the region;
 3. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the 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 Egypt.