



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Plenary sitting

18.1.2011

B7-0045/2011

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 Pakistan, murder of the Governor of Punjab, Salmaan Taseer

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on behalf of the ALDE Group

European Parliament resolution on Pakistan, murder of the governor of Punjab, Salmaan Taseer

The European Parliament,

having regard to its previous resolutions on Pakistan, in particular the one on the Religious freedom of 20 May 2010,

- having regard to the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton statement of 4 January 2011,
- having regard to the 1981 UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion and Belief,
- having regard to Rule 122(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - A. whereas Punjab Governor Salman Taseer has been killed by his bodyguard,
 - B. whereas the governor had recently angered Islamists by appealing for a Christian woman, sentenced to death for blasphemy, to be pardoned,
 - C. whereas police officials said the killer has made up his mind to kill someone five days earlier, when he heard an inflammatory speech by a cleric at a religious gathering in Rawalpindi,
 - D. whereas the blasphemy law has been controversial for quite some time, with human rights activists and liberals in Pakistan arguing that it is being misused to target religious minorities, such as Christians, and to hamper free expression, including on the internet
 - E. whereas defenders of minority rights are killed,
 - F. whereas Article 3(5) of the Treaty on European Union states that the promotion of democracy and respect for human rights and civil liberties are fundamental principles and aims of the European Union and constitute common ground for its relations with third countries,
 - G. whereas the majority and state religion of Pakistan is Sunni Islam, and minority groups with different convictions consist of Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Shiites, Ahmadis, Buddhists, Parsis, Bahá'ís, apostates, atheists, humanists and others,
 - H. whereas Pakistan is one of the key countries in the fight against terrorism and the spread of violent extremism,
 - I. Whereas EU assistance in trade and development are conditional upon respect for human rights and minority rights;

1. Condemns the brutal assassination of Salmaan Tasser, the governor of Pakistan's Punjab province;
2. Expresses condolences to his family, to the people and government of Pakistan;
3. Urges the Pakistan authorities to bring the persons responsible of this crime rapidly to justice;
4. Invites the Pakistan Government to increase the security of human rights defenders;
5. Calls for the abolition or reform of the blasphemy law, and to specifically prevent misuse of blasphemy laws to curb human rights, such as freedom of conscience and freedom of expression;
6. Expresses its solidarity with the Government of Pakistan in the fight against terrorism and the spread of violent extremism;
7. Calls on the Government of Pakistan to guarantee the human rights of minorities laid down in the Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, notably Article 18 thereof, which provides that 'everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion';
8. Supports all initiatives aimed at promoting dialogue and mutual respect among communities; calls on political and religious authorities to promote tolerance and to take initiatives against hatred and violent extremism;
9. Invites the Pakistani authorities to remove all propaganda promoting hatred, religious superiority and defamation of religion from the textbooks approved by the national curriculum wing of the Ministry of Education;
10. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to continue with financial support for human rights organisations and defenders, and to outline practical measures to support the growing civil society movement in Pakistan against the blasphemy laws and other discriminatory legislation;
11. Calls on the Council and the Commission to insist that the Government of Pakistan uphold the democracy and human rights clause enshrined in the Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; calls on the Commission to present a report on the effectiveness and efficiency of EU financing instruments related to democracy and human rights;
12. 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 Pakistan.