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Plenary sitting

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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

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on behalf of the ECR Group

European Parliament resolution on Pakistan: murder of the governor of Punjab

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on human rights and democracy in Pakistan, in particular the one of 20 May 2010 on religious freedom in Pakistan and those of 12 July 2007 and 25 October 2007,
 - having regard to its resolution of 16 December 2010 on the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2009 and the European Union's policy on the matter (2010/2202(INI)),
 - having regard to the Council conclusions adopted on 16 November 2009 on freedom of religion or belief, in which it underlines the strategic importance of this freedom and of countering religious intolerance,
 - having regard to the statements of 4 January 2011 by the spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the assassination of the governor of Punjab province, Salmaan Taseer and of 12 November 2010 by the Spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on a death penalty case in Pakistan,
 - having regard to the Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, signed on 29 April 2004 and in particular the preamble thereof,
 - having regard to the EU-Pakistan Joint Statement of 4 June 2010, in which it was stated that Pakistan would welcome EU support in various areas, including the development of human rights and democracy,
 - having regard to art 122(5) of the Rules of Procedure
- A. 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,
- B. whereas Pakistan has signed, but not ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT);
- C. whereas Pakistan is one of the key countries in the fight against terrorism and the spread of violent extremism, but in grave danger of losing this fight internally as its stability and democratic institutions are being put to a severe test by the increasing number of violent attacks by extremists occurring almost on a daily basis;

- D. whereas Pakistan's legal provisions known as the 'blasphemy laws', undermine the fundamental religious and minority rights granted by the country's Constitution and recognized by the 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights; whereas the blasphemy laws are misused by extremist groups and those wishing to settle personal scores, and have led to an increase of violence against members of religious minorities and whereas lawyers and human rights activists who defend blasphemy cases experience frequent death threats and harassment, and even many of those who have been successfully acquitted have to spend the remainder of their lives in hiding;
- E. whereas Salman Taseer, Governor of the province of Punjab, was one of the most vocal and visible critics of Pakistan's blasphemy laws and of their abuse by extremist groups in cases such as the one against Asia Bibi, the Christian woman sentenced to death for blasphemy under Section 295-C of the Pakistan Penal Code;
- F. whereas, on 4 January 2011, Salman Taseer, was assassinated in Islamabad by one of his own security guards, Malik Mumtaz Hussein Qadri, who disagreed with Taseer's opposition to Pakistan's blasphemy laws;
- G. whereas following the tragic event a broad alliance of the country's clergy, represented by Jamaate Ahle Sunnat Pakistan, an organisation that represents the moderate Bareilvi sect, issued a statement condoning the murderer and lionising his assassin, saying that *"No Muslim should attend the funeral or even try to pray for Salman Taseer or even express any kind of regret or sympathy over the incident"*;
1. Strongly condemns the murder of governor Salman Taseer and expresses its condolences to his relatives;
 2. Calls on the Government of Pakistan to not let the moderate voices in the country be silenced by extremists;
 3. Expresses its solidarity with the government of Pakistan in the fight against terrorism and the spread of violent extremism;
 4. Is deeply worried by the condoning of the murderer, Malik Mumtaz Qadri, by many of the country's religious leaders, including those represented by Jamaate Ahle Sunnat Pakistan;
 5. Calls on the Government of Pakistan to repeal the blasphemy laws, as they are not in line with internationally recognized standards and constantly abused by extremists to attack and persecute not just religious minorities such as Baha'is and Christians, but people of all faiths;
 6. Calls on the Government of Pakistan to immediately release all prisoners held captive for alleged cases of blasphemy, including Asia Bibi, and to drop all charges against them;
 7. Welcomes the measures taken and the commitments expressed by the Government of Pakistan in the interest of religious minorities, such as establishing a quota such as establishing a quota of five per cent for minorities in the federal jobs sector; recognizing non-Muslim public holidays; providing minority seats in the Senate and declaring

National Minorities Day, while recognizing that these measures and commitments don't go far enough and much more needs to be done to effectively protect religious minorities and their supporters from attacks and discrimination;

8. Calls on the government of Pakistan to ratify fully and without reserves the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the 1984 UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; considers that the freedom of belief as enshrined in the UN Covenant provides the adequate framework and reference to which all signatories should adhere, providing protection to their citizens in order to enable them to freely exercise their faith;
9. Calls on the Member States and the European Commission to continue financial support of human rights organisations and defenders and outline practical measures to support the civil society movement in Pakistan against the blasphemy laws and other discriminatory legislation;
10. Repeats its call on the Commission to present a report on the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement and the democracy and human rights clause;
11. Is of the opinion that the temporary customs duty waiver, aimed at boosting Pakistan's exports as a way of providing funds for reconstruction after last year's devastating floods, which is currently being debated, can only be implemented if real improvements are made in the human rights situation of the country;
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.