



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Plenary sitting

18.1.2011

B7-0062/2011

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 governor of Punjab

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on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

European Parliament resolution on Pakistan: murder of governor of Punjab

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolution on human rights and democracy in Pakistan, and especially the one of 20 May 2010 on religious freedom in Pakistan,

– having regard to having regard to the statement of 4 January 2011 by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the assassination of the governor of the Punjab province, Salmaan Taseer and earlier one's in 2010 on attacks in Pakistan, and on the adoption of the 18th Constitutional Amendment,

– having regard to the statement of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon condemning the assassination of the Pakistan's Punjab province, Salmaan Taseer,

– 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 Articles 6 and 7 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and Article 13 of the EC Treaty, which commit the EU, as well as the Member States, to uphold human rights and fundamental freedoms and which provide means at European level to fight discrimination and human rights violations,

– having regard to EU commitments to work against the death penalty, especially expressed in numerous reports and resolutions of the European Parliament,

– having regard to Rule 122(5) of its 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 the internal stability and democratic institutions are being put to a severe test by the increasing number of violent attacks by right wing religious fundamentalists which occur on an almost daily basis, and have hardened since the war in Afghanistan,

C. whereas the Governor of the Punjab province was killed on 4 January 2011 at a market in Islamabad by his own bodyguard, a fanatic police officer of the Punjab's elite force, responsible for the security of VIP,

D. whereas this murder was perpetrated as punishment for the fight of Salmaan Taseer for a tolerant and democratic Pakistan and his positions for a reform of the blasphemy law and especially in the case of Asia Bibi, a Christian woman sentenced to death in a blasphemy case,

E. whereas fanatic Islamic religious organisations, including the two large religious parties, praise the killer for his murder which shows the level of radicalisation and consolidation of

religious militancy and religious extremism within Pakistani society,

F. whereas numerous blasphemy cases became known in Pakistan, alone in 2009 76 people were charged with blasphemy in 25 registered cases, including 17 people charged under Section 295C of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC),

G. whereas lawyers, human rights activists socialists and trade unionists in Pakistan experience frequent death threats and harassment, and lawyers who defend blasphemy cases are especially vulnerable to such risks, and whereas even many of those who have been successfully acquitted have to spend the remainder of their lives in hiding,

H. 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, particularly Ahmadis, but also Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Shiites, Buddhists, Parsis, Bahá'ís and critical citizens who live in a permanent atmosphere of fear and are subject to numerous ways of persecution and attacks,

I. whereas reports and surveys done by independent agencies reveal that minorities in Pakistan are deprived of basic civil liberties and equal opportunities in jobs, education and political representation,

J. whereas it is estimated that over 85% of women in Pakistan face domestic abuse, which includes physical and psychological abuse; whereas violence against girls and women, including rape, domestic violence and forced marriages, continues to be a serious problem, part of which can be attributed to Sharia law,

1. Strongly condemns the assassination of Governor Salmaan Taseer as criminal act of fanatic intolerance,
2. Expresses its condolence to the family of the victim and expresses its respect for the courageous fighter who gave his life in the fight for tolerance, democracy and the respect of human rights,
3. Asks the Pakistani authorities to use all legal instruments to bring the murderer to Court, ensure a fair trial and not to give way for any kind of pressure and influence in the given situation in the country,
4. Reminds the Pakistani government of its obligation under International law, that a state cannot, through its domestic law, negate its international human rights obligations,
5. Strongly opposes the death penalty, and respectively the blasphemy law which knows the capital punishment as the only possible form,
6. Calls upon the Government of Pakistan to carry out a thoroughgoing review of the blasphemy laws and their current application, as well as – inter alia – of Section 295 C of the Penal Code, which prescribes a mandatory death penalty for anyone found guilty of blasphemy, and in the meantime to implement amendments as suggested by

the Federal Minister for Minority Affairs;

7. Calls on the Government to follow through with its 2008 promise to commute all death sentences to prison terms as a first step in the direction of abolishing the death penalty;
8. Calls on the Government 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";
9. 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;
10. Calls on the Council and Commission to continue their efforts for the respect of human rights, 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;
11. Calls on the Commission to present a report on the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement and the democracy and human rights clause;
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.