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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 The situation of women in Afganistan and Pakistan

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on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

European Parliament resolution on The situation of women in Afganistan and Pakistan

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of 10 December 1948,
 - having regard to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW, 1979 (Afghanistan 1980, Pakistan 1996),
 - having regard to UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) on women, peace and security, and UN Security Council Resolution 1888 (2009) on sexual violence against women and children in situations of armed conflict, which emphasises the responsibility of all states to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for crimes against humanity and war crimes, including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls,
 - having regard to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 10 December 1984, and to UN General Assembly Declaration 3318 on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict of 14 December 1974, in particular paragraph 4 thereof, which calls for effective measures against persecution, torture, violence and degrading treatment of women,
 - having regard to the new UN Gender Entity (UN Women) and to the appointment in March 2010 of a Special Representative to the UN Secretary General on Sexual Violence in armed conflict,
 - having regard to the EU Guidelines on violence and discrimination against women and girls and the EU guidelines on children and armed conflict,
 - having regard to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women on 15 September 1995 and to Parliament’s resolutions of 18 May 2000 on the follow-up to the Beijing Action Platform and of 10 March 2005 on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women - Platform for Action (Beijing+10)¹ and of 25 February 2010 on the follow-up to the Beijing Action Platform (Beijing +15),
 - having regard to Rule 122(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas both Afghanistan and Pakistan are a party to a number of international agreements on human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child,

B. whereas Afghanistan is the most dangerous country for women (according to an international poll of experts on gender issues) with high levels of violence, poor healthcare and poverty, followed by the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Pakistan,

C. whereas under the Taliban rule women and girls in Afghanistan were not allowed to go to work or school, had difficult access to healthcare and were not been able to leave their houses without a male relative,

D. whereas women's rights are under threat from the deteriorating security conditions in Afghanistan and resurgent Taliban,

E. whereas even though there have been some progress in girls' access to education and health care, women and girls in Afghanistan continue to face enormous challenges and many women are still denied basic human rights, and whereas women who do attempt to speak out or take on public roles that challenge ingrained gender stereotypes of what is acceptable for women to do or not, are often intimidated and/or killed,

F. whereas including women in the peace, reconciliation and transition processes is the best means of safeguarding and furthering women's hard-won civil freedoms and human rights,

G. whereas Pakistan is one of the countries with the highest rates of dowry murder, so-called honour killings (karo-kari) and early marriages, and the concepts of women as property and honour are deeply entrenched in the social, political and economic fabric of the country,

H. whereas according to several women's rights defenders the Pakistani government is not taking serious actions to stop the so-called honour killings,

I. whereas there has been no progress in ensuring justice or accountability in Afghanistan, for past war crimes and crimes against humanity, which have characterized decades of warfare and lawlessness; whereas impunity is widespread and deeply entrenched in the society,

J. whereas violence against women such as rape, "honour killings", early and forced marriage, sexual abuse, and slavery remain widespread, is tolerated or condoned within the family and community, within traditional and religious leadership circles as well as the formal and informal justice system; whereas the Afghan Government has failed to adequately protect the rights of women despite constitutional guarantees,

1. Expresses its serious concern regarding the situation of women in Afghanistan and Pakistan;
2. Is deeply concerned that violence against woman has taken epidemic proportions in Afghanistan and Pakistan;
3. Condemns in its strongest terms all kind of violence against women in Afghanistan and Pakistan;

4. Notes that the ongoing conflict, militarisation, NATO airstrikes, and cultural practices combined make the situation even worse for women and girls, deteriorating their chances in spheres where they can influence change such as education, economic opportunities, women's participation in public life and rights, justice and the rule of law;

5. Insists that the strive for women's rights and gender equality should never be instrumentalised and used to justify militarisation, deepened conflict, military interventions, and war;

6. Strongly insists that reconciliation and consolidation of peace cannot be imposed militarily from the outside but have to be developed inside Afghanistan; calls therefore for an immediate end of the military operations and the withdrawal of the foreign troops from the country;

7. Acknowledges the consequences of conflict and insecurity on women's lives: Human rights and women's rights advocates as well as independent journalists some of whom are women face an increasing amount of threats (from government, factional commanders and the insurgency), there is next to no safety nets for these individuals;

8. Underlines that the respect for women's rights – and human rights in general – is of paramount importance to Afghanistan's future security and development; calls on the Afghan authorities to effectively protect women and girls in both the private and public sphere; underlines that this must be translated into policies and concrete programmes; calls on the Afghan authorities, including local authorities, to take all possible steps to protect women against sexual violence and other forms of gender-related violence and to bring the perpetrators of such acts to justice;

9. Salutes the courage of and expresses its support for the Afghan and Pakistani women rights activists who are, despite many obstacles, struggling for their rights;

10. Urges the EU to be in contact with these women's rights activists and NGO's for women's rights and ensure that they have a fully political support;

11. Strongly regrets that girl's and women's education is hindered by the conflict, number of girls and women in school is higher now than during the Taliban years, but compared with 2005 it is lower;

12. Calls on the EU to encourage the appointment of a woman to the High Council of the Afghan Supreme Court;

13. Calls on the EU to give political and financial support to the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission;

14. Welcomes the necessary establishment of a network between key Afghan and European women's rights defenders to ensure that Afghan women are not forgotten during the process of transition;

15. Calls on the Pakistan government to take more efficient steps to stop all crimes against women, especially early marriages and the so-called honour killings;
16. Recognizes that there is a humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, which will deepen over winter months and has definitely been affected by the rise of prices for basic products due to the global economic crisis. This affects all Afghans, but it places women and their dependents in a particularly difficult position;
17. Calls on the EU Member States Governments to strongly oppose the use of sexual assaults, intimidation and targeting of women in Afghanistan and Pakistan;
18. Calls on the EU member states to promote actively and durable - both politically and financially - the full implementation of the Security Council resolution 1325 and the establishment of UN resolution-1325 control institutions and mechanisms at the European level and United Nations to ensure the implementation of the resolution on all international levels;
19. Strongly believes that the changes taking place in Afghanistan must contribute towards the end of discrimination of women and their full participation in society on equal terms with men and in compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW;
20. Emphasises the need to implement gender specific measures and actions to stop violence against women, an effective and systematic gender-equality approach in the ENP policies; including eradicating women's poverty, fighting female illiteracy, promoting women's employment, ensuring women's access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, and achieving equal participation of women and men in decision-making;
21. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, to the UN Secretary-General and the Secretary General of NATO, and to the governments and parliaments of the Member States and of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.