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B7-0259/2014

## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on security and Human trafficking in the Sinai  
(2014/2630(RSP))

**Olle Schmidt, Marietje Schaake, Sarah Ludford, Louis Michel, Ramon Tremosa i Balcells, Angelika Werthmann, Robert Rochefort, Ivo Vajgl, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Marielle de Sarnez, Kristiina Ojula, Hannu Takkula, Phil Bennion**  
on behalf of the ALDE Group

**B7-0259/2014**

**European Parliament resolution on security and Human trafficking in the Sinai (2014/2630(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its resolution of 15 March 2012 on human trafficking in Sinai, in particular the case of Solomon W., and on 16 December 2010 on Eritrean refugees held hostage in the Sinai,
- having regard to the statements by High Representative/Vice-President Catherine Ashton concerning the security situation in Sinai on 11 September and, 8 and 3 October 2013,
- having regard to the Europol publication on 4 March 2014 on Irregular migrants from the Horn of Africa with European sponsors kidnapped for ransom and held in the Sinai,
- having regard to the ACP – EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement,
- having regard to the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 protocol thereto, as well as the 1954 UNHCR's memorandum of understanding with the Egyptian government,
- having regard to the Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa,
- having regards to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,
- having regard to the 2000 United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, especially Articles 6 and 9 thereof,
- having regard to the Brussels Declaration on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, adopted on 20 September 2002,
- having regard to Directive on a short-term residence permit for victims of trafficking (2004/81)
- having regard to the UNHCR Guidelines on Eritrea;
- having regard to the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings of 2005,
- having regard to Rule 122 of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. whereas the security situation has further deteriorated and acts of terrorism and violent attacks against security forces have further intensified in Sinai; whereas, according to official data, more than a hundred security personnel have died in violent attacks since 30 June 2013; whereas on 16 February 2014 a bomb on a tourist bus in Egypt's Sinai killed 4 people and injured at least 14; whereas the Egyptian government seems unable to get control over the security crisis in the Sinai; whereas the difficult social and economic situation of the Sinai are to be considered along with the security concerns in the region; whereas the lawlessness of the region enables criminal networks, human traffickers, and other criminal gangs to work unhindered and unpunished;
- B. whereas thousands of asylum seekers and migrants from the Horn of Africa flee their countries of origin every month due to the humanitarian crisis; whereas from Eritrea alone up to 3000 people flee every month, according to the U.N. special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea; whereas it is estimated that thousands of people have been kidnapped in eastern Sudan, taken to Egypt and tortured in Sinai of which more than 4.000 have died since the beginning of 2008;
- C. whereas thousands of people lose their lives and disappear in Sinai every year while others, including many women and children, are kidnapped in refugee camps or surrounding areas, especially in the Sudanese Shagarab refugee camp or on their way to family reunion in Sudan or Ethiopia and held hostage for ransom by human traffickers; whereas victims of human traffickers are abused in the most dehumanising and brutal manner and are subject to systemic violence and torture, rape and sexual abuse, and forced labour, or have been killed for organ trade; whereas torture camps have been set up for this specific case, according to victims, neighbours, and human rights organisations;
- D. whereas there are credible reports of some Sudanese and Egyptian security forces colluding with traffickers of asylum seekers and migrants, and an almost complete failure by both Sudan and Egypt to investigate and prosecute officials responsible, thereby engaging both countries' obligations under the UN Convention Against Torture;
- E. whereas trafficking in human beings in Sinai is an extremely profitable business for organised crime, being estimated to generate more than 10m USD per year; whereas traffickers demands are increasing reaching up to 50.000 USD for the release of a victim; whereas according to UNHCR complex networks of trafficking have been set up involving people-smugglers, kidnappers like groups of Rashaida tribesmen in Eritrea and northeast Sudan, intermediaries inside refugee camps, bribed military, police, and border controls, and criminal elements within the Egyptian Bedouin communities;
- F. whereas the trafficking trade is facilitated by the expansion of mobile phones, which are used to coordinate the trafficking and collect ransoms; whereas ransom payments are arranged by mobile phones through money transfer facilities such as Western Union and MoneyGram or through individual middlemen and company intermediaries;
- G. whereas those who are not able to collect the ransom are often killed and even if the requested ransom is paid there is no guarantee that the hostages will be released; whereas a new practice has arisen in the trafficking value chain in relation to hostages who are incapable of collecting the ransom; whereas traffickers present themselves as having a

‘humanitarian’ purpose buy up ‘loss-making’ hostages and sell them at much reduced prices;

- H. whereas many of the families of the victims live in EU Member States; whereas according to the latest Europol publication several EU Member States have had reports of blackmailing within the European Union on behalf of Bedouin organised criminal groups in the Sinai; whereas it is in the interest of the EU to know which criminal organisations are involved in the process of blackmailing;
  - I. whereas prior to June 2012, an average of 1.500 asylum seekers entered Israel each month through the Sinai while according to the Israeli authorities this number has significantly decreased in 2013 due to the completion of the fence along the Israeli-Egyptian border;
  - J. whereas the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children defines trafficking in persons as ‘the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation’;
  - K. whereas the EU has repeatedly invited Egypt and Israel to develop and improve the quality of the assistance and protection offered to asylum seekers and refugees residing or transiting on their territory; whereas on 7 November 2013 Sudan officials seek EU help on trafficking;
  - L. whereas Egypt intercepts thousands of trafficking victims after they have escaped from, or been released by, traffickers, prosecutes them for unlawful presence in Sinai, detains them in inhuman and degrading conditions in Sinai’s police stations, denies them access to urgently-needed medical care and international organisations such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees which therefore cannot register their asylum claims, and deports them to Eritrea or Ethiopia, thereby violating Egyptian and international anti-trafficking law;
1. Condemns the recent terrorist attacks against security forces and civilians in the Sinai; is deeply concerned about the further deterioration of the security situation in Sinai, and calls for intensified efforts by the Egyptian interim government and security forces to restore security.
  2. Is very concerned about the cases of human trafficking in Sinai and urges the Egyptian authorities to make urgent and substantial efforts to halt the ongoing abuses against refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in the Sinai region, as well as rapidly intervene in order to ensure that all persons held captive are freed; Stresses the responsibility of Egyptian, Israeli, Eritrean and Sudanese authorities to stop the human traffickers in Sinai and to provide effective protection to all victims of trafficking in human beings, especially women and children, from becoming a victim again; calls on the involved countries and the international community to intensify their efforts to combat human smuggling and trafficking in the Sinai.

3. Urges the Egyptian and Sudanese authorities to investigate and prosecute traffickers and any security forces colluding with them where there is sufficient admissible evidence, arrest and prosecute suspects in prompt and fair trials that meet international standards, applying the national and international law against this type of organised crime concerning violation of human rights, human trafficking, and slavery.
4. Calls on the Egyptian authorities to respect its own anti trafficking laws, which guarantee trafficking victims immunity from prosecution and access to assistance and protection and to fully implement, through its national legislation, the principles of the Conventions to which Egypt is party, i.e. the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (and its optional 1967 Protocol ), the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrants Workers and Members of their Family, which it ratified in 1993 and which subsequently entered into force in 2003;
5. Demands on Egypt and Israel that undocumented asylum-seekers who have been victims of trafficking, are not detained or charged with illegal entry and to ensure that all asylum-seekers are given access to fair, transparent and effective asylum procedures and are protected from forcible return while their asylum procedure is on-going; Calls for full access of UN agencies and human rights organisations to the areas affected by human smuggling and trafficking in Sinai and to provide full and unimpeded access to detention facilities used for holding asylum-seekers and refugees;
6. Welcomes the decision of Israel's Supreme Court of 16 September 2013 to repeal the provision of the Prevention of Infiltration Act that mandated automatic detention but calls on Israel to rescind its 10 December 2013 law which allows for indefinite detention of asylum seekers; Calls on the Egyptian authorities to provide access to asylum procedures for trafficking victims and to prohibit deportation back to Eritrea; Reminds of Article 89 of the new constitution, forbidding slavery and all forms of oppression and forced exploitation against humans.
7. Reminds that systematic and pervasive violations of human rights in Eritrea cause thousands of Eritreans to flee their country every month; Reminds Sudanese authorities of their obligation to ensure security of refugees and asylum seekers and the priority to the immediate development and implementation of sustained and adequate security measures in the Shagarab refugee camp; calls on UNHCR in eastern Sudan to closely monitor and report on the kidnapping and trafficking of Eritrean refugees in and near the town of Kassala and the surrounding refugee camps as well as on security force collusion with traffickers;
8. Reminds Eritrea, Sudan, Egypt, and Israel that considerable cooperation and coordination is required between all of the governments along the trafficking route to achieve an effective response to trafficking; calls on all governments to increase effective and human rights compliant coordination of law enforcement and immigration services, particularly to rapidly identify and apprehend traffickers, and to identify, assist and protect victims of trafficking; calls on governments to ensure that cooperation between states complies with international law and standards, and does not infringe in any way upon the rights and

safety of asylum-seekers and refugees, with particular regard to the rights of freedom of movement and the right to claim asylum;

9. Emphasises once again the EU's offer to assist the authorities in developing and improving the quality of the assistance and protection offered to asylum seekers and refugees residing or transiting on their territory; welcomes the Sudanese government's call for EU support;
10. Calls on the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commission to actively work together with the UNHCR to set up an action group with states involved in the various stages of the trafficking chain, including sources, transit, and destination.
11. Is very concerned on the reports of blackmailing taking place from within the EU; derives therefore the EU authorities' responsibility to act and calls on the EU's Foreign Ministers and Ministers of Justice to take appropriate measures; Calls on EU institution to put pressure on Israel and Egypt to take steps to tackle trafficking in Sinai, to continue funding NGO-led projects in the region and to drive forward the implementation of Europol's forthcoming recommendations.
12. Reminds that the human rights abuses and poor situation in Eritrea is the main cause for people leaving the country and take the risk of being kidnapped and taken to the Sinai; Calls on the European Commission to emphasis respect for human rights when negotiating with the Eritrean Government, and to investigate the Eritrean Border Control Authority and its alleged involvement in abduction, smuggling and trafficking of refugees;
13. Reminds that one of the root causes of the crises is the marginalisation of the Bedouins in the Sinai; is deeply concerned on the radicalisation and terrorism in the Sinai, as well as spill-over effect on the region.
14. Evokes that any possible solution to the crisis includes work on human rights and rule of law enforcement in Egypt, the full implementation of the Egyptian constitution, reform of security services, and the creation of economic opportunities for Bedouins, including their access to police and military.
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the High Representative / Vice-President, the Council and the Commission, to the governments and parliaments of the Member States, to the Egyptian, the Israeli, the Eritrean and the Sudanese governments, to the Egyptian Parliament, the Israeli Knesset, the Sudan National Assembly, and the Eritrean Nation Assembly, to the UN Secretary General and the UN Human Rights Council.