



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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*Plenary sitting*

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15.4.2014

B7-0392/2014

## **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 the situation in certain vulnerable communities in Syria  
(2014/2695(RSP))

**Bastiaan Belder, Mara Bizzotto, Rolandas Paksas, Juozas Imbrasas**  
on behalf of the EFD Group

**B7-0392/2014**

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in certain vulnerable communities in Syria  
(2014/2695(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- Having regard to its previous resolutions, in particular those of 12 September 2013 and 6 February 2014 on the situation in Syria, that of 10 October 2013 on recent cases of violence and persecution against Christians, notably in Maaloula (Syria) and Peshawar (Pakistan) and the case of Pastor Saeed Abedini (Iran), that of 27 October 2011 on the situation in Egypt and Syria, in particular of Christian communities and that of 20 January 2011 on the situation of Christians in the context of freedom of religion,
  - Having regard to Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
  - Having regard to Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,
  - Having regard to the UN Declaration of the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion and Belief of 1981,
  - Having regard to Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 10 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
  - Having regard to EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief,
  - Having regard to the statement of 8 April 2014 by Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice president of the Commission in reference to the killing of Father Frans van der Lugt,
  - having regard to Rules 122(5) and 110(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. Whereas Father Frans Van der Lugt, a Dutch priest, was assassinated Monday 7th of April by a masked gunman who shot him at his monastery, in a rebel-held district of Homs,
- B. Whereas less than 200 Christians families remain trapped in rebel-held parts of Homs according to Syrian Red Crescent,
- C. Whereas out of the 160,000-270,000 Christians living in Aleppo before the war, between 20,000-30,000 have fled the city as a result of the fighting and fear for the future
- D. Whereas on March 21, extremist groups affiliated with al-Qaeda reportedly crossed into Syria from Turkey and seized the town of Kessab; whereas at least 700 Armenian families - over 3000 individuals - fled or were thrown out of Kessab,
- E. Whereas in Kessab and other Syrian towns Christians are forced by the Islamic extremists to accept the "dhimmi status", which includes the payment of the Jizyah and prohibition of certain religious symbols,

- F. Whereas Father Paolo Dall'Oglio has been missing since July 2013 and Bishop Boulos Yazigi of the Greek Orthodox Church and Bishop John Ibrahim of the Assyrian Orthodox Church were seized April 2013 from their car by gunmen outside the northern city of Aleppo; whereas their fate is still unknown,
- G. Whereas the Syrian Christian activist Marcell Shehwaro recently described the current situation as being " impossible to live with this armed opposition. Leave this country, it's not ours anymore" ,
- H. Whereas the EU expresses itself in favour of the rights of religious communities and the protection of their identity all over the world and in favour of the recognition and protection of religious minorities, without any distinction,
1. Condemns in the strongest possible terms the killing of Father Frans Van der Lugt, an inhumane act of violence against a man who heroically stood by the people of Syria amid sieges and growing difficulties,
  2. Condemns the attack to the Town of Kessab by the hands of Al Qaeda's Al Nusra Front; calls for an international investigation with the aim to clarify the role that Turkey may have had in such attack,
  3. Is deeply concerned by the increasing degree to which religious minorities, especially Christians, are specifically targeted by radical groups in Syria and over the world,
  4. Calls for the release of representatives of Christian churches who have been abducted, among them Jesuit priest Father Paolo Dall'Oglio, Syrian-Orthodox Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim and Greek-Orthodox Boulos Yazigi,
  5. Stresses that all actors have a duty to protect and to improve the security situation of all the different minorities present in Syria, including the Christians,
  6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the UN-Arab League Special Envoy to Syria and all the parties involved in the conflict in Syria.