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15.4.2014

B7-0403/2014

## 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 Pakistan: recent cases of persecution  
(2014/2694(RSP))

**Cristian Dan Preda, Bernd Posselt, Eija-Riitta Korhola, Filip Kaczmarek, Michael Gahler, Tunne Kelam, Elena Băsescu, Monica Luisa Macovei, Eduard Kukan, Jean Roatta, Roberta Angelilli, Petri Sarvamaa, Sari Essayah, Laima Liucija Andrikienė, Dubravka Šuica, Salvador Sedó i Alabart, Bogusław Sonik**  
on behalf of the PPE Group

**European Parliament resolution on Pakistan: recent cases of persecution (2014/2694(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Pakistan, especially those of 10 October 2013<sup>1</sup> and of 20 May 2010<sup>2</sup>, as well as its resolution on the situation of Christians in the context of freedom of religion of 20 January 2011<sup>3</sup>
- having regard to Art 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,
- having regard to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion and Belief of 1981,
- having regard to the reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief,
- having regard to the Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers (Addendum) Mission to Pakistan, of April 2013
- having regards to the statement of Amnesty International on the death sentence of a Christian man in Pakistan of 27 March 2014<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 December 2013 on the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World and the European Union’s policy on the matter, condemning the persecution of Christians and other religious minorities<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to the EU-Pakistan five-year engagement plan of March 2012, containing priorities such as good governance, and dialogue on human rights,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0422+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0194+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0194+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/pakistan-christian-man-sentenced-death-under-blasphemy-law-2014-03-27>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bTA%2bP7-TA-2013-0575%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN>

- having regard to the Council conclusions on Pakistan of 11 March 2013, reiterating the EU's expectations regarding the promotion of and respect for human rights and condemning all violence including against religious minorities<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to Rules 122(5) and 110(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas a Christian couple was sentenced to death on 4 April 2014 for allegedly sending a text message insulting the Prophet Mohammed; whereas the couple denied possibility and declared that the originating phone was lost a while before the message was sent;
  - B. whereas Sawan Masih, a Pakistani Christian was sentenced to death on 28 March 2014 for blasphemy against the Prophet Mohammed; whereas the announcement of allegations against Masih sparked fierce rioting in the Christian neighbourhood of the city of Lahore with many buildings including 2 churches burnt down;
  - C. whereas Christians, who represent about 1,6% of the population in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, suffer from prejudice and sporadic bouts of mob violence;
  - D. whereas the majority of Pakistani Christians lead a precarious existence, often fearful of allegations of blasphemy, a subject which can provoke outbursts of public violence;
  - E. whereas in November 2012, 72 year old Masood Ahmad, a British man of the minority Ahmadi sect was jailed in Pakistan on blasphemy charges;
  - F. whereas in November 2010. Mohammad Asghar, a UK citizen with a mental illness, living in Pakistan, was arrested after allegedly sending letters to various officials claiming he was a prophet and is now facing death penalty;
  - G. whereas 5 Hindu temples have been attacked in different parts of Sindh (in Tharparkar, Hyderabad and Larkana) over the past month and 3 Hindu boys have been accused of blasphemy in Badin (Sindh) as they had spray painted some signs on the occasion of Holi (Hindu festival of colour) and are currently under arrest.
  - H. whereas Pakistan's blasphemy laws make it dangerous for religious minorities to express themselves freely or engage openly in religious activities;
  - I. whereas since years several cases of the application of blasphemy laws in Pakistan raised global concern;
  - J. whereas Pakistan plays an important role in fostering stability in South Asia and should therefore lead by example in strengthening rule of law and human rights;
1. Expresses its deep concern that the controversial blasphemy laws are open to misuse that can affect people of all faiths in Pakistan; expresses its particular concern that the use of blasphemy laws, which were publicly opposed by the late Minister Shahbaz

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/135946.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/135946.pdf)

Bhatti and by the late Governor Salman Taseer, is currently on the rise to target Christians in Pakistan;

2. Calls on the Pakistani authorities to immediately release prisoners who are convicted on the grounds of blasphemy, including several cases of Christians, to overrule the death sentences in the appeal and to ensure the rule of law in trials that raise global concerns with regards to fairness and transparency;
3. Calls on the Government of Pakistan to turn the de facto moratorium on the death penalty into a real abolition of the death penalty;
4. Calls on the Government of Pakistan to carry out a thorough review of the blasphemy laws and their current application, in particular Sections 295 B and C of the Penal Code, which prescribe mandatory life sentences (295 B and C) or even the death penalty (295 C) for alleged acts of blasphemy, especially in light of the recent death sentences on Christians in Pakistan;
5. Is deeply concerned about the general situation of religious minorities in Pakistan, and in this regard especially about the Christian churches, which have received threats from Taliban and other extremist groups;
6. Recalls that freedom of religion and minority rights are guaranteed by Pakistan's constitution; welcomes the measures taken in the interest of religious minorities by the Government of Pakistan since November 2008, such as establishing a five per cent quota for minorities in the federal job sector, recognising non-Muslim public holidays and declaring a National Minorities Day;
7. Urges, however, the Pakistani government, to increase efforts for a better inter-religious understanding and to actively address religious hostility by societal actors and combat religious intolerance, acts of violence and intimidation and to act against the perception of impunity;
8. Strongly condemns all acts of violence against religious communities, including Christians, as well as all kinds of discrimination and intolerance on the grounds of religion and belief; stresses that the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is a fundamental human right;
9. Calls on the Government of Pakistan to intervene to protect victims of religiously motivated mob violence and encourages all Pakistanis to work together to promote and ensure tolerance and mutual understanding;
10. Reiterates its condemnation of the attack on the All Saints Church in Peshawar as well as the attacks on Christians which have taken place in the past; welcomes the widespread condemnation of the attacks by political players and parts of Pakistan's civil society; recalls on the Government of Pakistan to bring to justice those behind the attack on the All Saints Church;

11. Reiterates its concern about the exodus of Christians from various countries in recent years;
12. Stresses the important role Pakistan plays for fostering stability in the whole region; encourages Pakistan's constructive role in promoting a secure Afghanistan and therefore urges the Pakistani government to strengthen the respect for fundamental human rights in their own country as well as the whole region;
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the European Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the UN, the UN Human Rights Council, and the Government and Parliament of Pakistan.