



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

Plenary sitting

15.7.2014

B8-0007/2014

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 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on Freedom of expression and assembly in Egypt
(2014/2728(RSP))

Charles Tannock
on behalf of the ECR Group

B8-0007/2014

European Parliament resolution on Freedom of expression and assembly in Egypt (2014/2728(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Egypt,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions of 10 February on Egypt,
 - having regard to the statement of the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 11 April 2014 on Egypt,
 - having regard to the declaration on behalf of the European Union of 5 June 2014 on the presidential elections in Egypt,
 - having regard to the EU Guidelines on Freedom of Expression online and offline of 12 May 2014,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, to which Egypt is a party,
 - having regard to the Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, in particular Article 5 and part III outlining public rights, freedoms and duties,
 - having regard to Law 107 of 2013 on the Right to Public Meetings, Processions and Peaceful Demonstrations, adopted by the Arab Republic of Egypt on 24 November 2013,
 - having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Egypt is a key player in the southern Mediterranean, an important trading partner of the EU, and a major recipient of EU aid;
- B. whereas the social, economic and political situation in Egypt can have a significant impact on neighbouring countries;
- C. whereas the euphoria which emerged from the Arab Spring and the collapse of the Mubarak regime has been replaced with a period of political and social polarisation, increasing violence, and economic stagnation;
- D. whereas there is growing concern of a return to authoritarianism in Egypt, with a military-backed crackdown on freedom of speech and freedom to protest, and the arrest of activists;

- E. whereas on 23 June 2014 a court in Cairo convicted a number of Egyptian and international journalists, including British and Dutch nationals, of membership and support of a terrorist organisation, amongst other charges, and sentenced them to years in prison,
- F. whereas on 23 June 2014, the same day as the case concerning the above-mentioned journalists, the Egyptian authorities extended the detention of 23 activists held under laws applicable to peaceful demonstrations,
- G. whereas, in line with its reviewed European Neighbourhood Policy and notably the ‘more for more’ approach, the EU’s level and scope of engagement with Egypt is incentive-based and therefore dependent on progress with regard to the country’s respecting its commitments, including those on democracy, the rule of law, human rights and gender equality;
1. Expresses its strong solidarity with the people of Egypt and supports their continued efforts to secure a peaceful democratic transition towards political, economic and social reforms;
 2. Expresses concern about threats to procedural safeguards and upholding of due process in connection with court proceedings in Egypt;
 3. Strongly condemns the conviction and sentencing on 23 June of national and international journalists by the Egyptian authorities, in the absence of adequate evidence and in contravention of the freedoms contained in the new Egyptian Constitution;
 4. Urges President al-Sisi to bring the above-mentioned cases under review, as part of Egypt's commitment to and respect for basic human rights and the freedom of expression; considers that such a review should explicitly consider setting aside the convictions;
 5. Reminds the Government of Egypt of its obligation to uphold the rule of law and protect its citizens regardless of their political views, affiliation, or religion;
 6. Expresses its strong support for all Egyptians who hold inclusive democratic aspirations and values for their country, with the ambition of creating a free and fair society which upholds the rule of law and fundamental rights;
 7. Strongly supports an inclusive political process with the participation of all democratic actors in order to ensure that the necessary economic and governance reforms are made in the interests of all Egyptian citizens;
 8. Notes with concern that continued violence and political polarisation will further weaken an already fragile Egyptian economy, with ordinary Egyptian men and women suffering as a consequence;

9. Expresses its concern at the abuse of the laws applicable to peaceful demonstrations, and in particular the effect such measures may have on the possibility for citizens to peacefully protest; believes that respect for freedom of assembly and expression, as guaranteed under the new Egyptian Constitution, form an important part of Egypt's democratic transition;
10. 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 governments and parliaments of the Member States, and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt.