



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

Plenary sitting

10.2.2015

B8-0162/2015

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 Saudi Arabia, the case of Raif Badawi
(2015/2550(RSP))

Cristian Dan Preda, Davor Ivo Stier, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Giovanni La Via, Lara Comi, Tunne Kelam, Jiří Pospíšil, Dubravka Šuica, Pavel Švoboda, Stanislav Polčák, Francesc Gambús, Csaba Sógor, Jaromír Štětina, Jarosław Wałęsa, Tomáš Zdechovský, Jeroen Lenaers, Marijana Petir, Andrej Plenković, Franck Proust, Joachim Zeller, Ivan Štefanec, Seán Kelly, Michaela Šojdrová, Claude Rolin, József Nagy, Monica Macovei

on behalf of the PPE Group

B8-0162/2015

**European Parliament resolution on Saudi Arabia, the case of Raif Badawi
(2015/2550(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 18 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 19 of the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
 - having regard to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,
 - having regard to its resolution of 24 March 2011 on EU relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council,
 - having regard to its resolution of 11 March 2014 on Saudi Arabia, its relations with the EU and its role in the Middle East and North Africa,
 - having regard to the visit of the European Parliament’s Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights on behalf of President Martin Schulz to Saudi Arabia from 24-25 November 2013,
 - having regard to its resolution of 6th July 2006 on freedom of expression on the internet,
 - having regard to Rules 135(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers;
- B. whereas the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is an influential political, economic, cultural and religious actor in the Middle East and the Islamic world, and a founder and leading member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and of the G-20 group;
- C. whereas the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an important partner for the EU;
- D. whereas KSA has a lively community of online activists and the highest number of Twitter users in the Middle East;
- E. whereas the opening of the dialogue between KSA and the EU on human rights could provide a very useful opportunity to enhance mutual understanding and promote further reforms in the country;

- F. whereas flogging punishment is strictly prohibited under international human rights law, including the UN Convention against torture, which Saudi Arabia has ratified;
- G. whereas on 17 June 2012, Raif Badawi, a Saudi human rights activist and blogger, creator of the website Free Saudi Liberals was arrested on a charge of “insulting Islam” through electronic channels and brought to court on several other charges;
- H. whereas in November 2014, Raif Badawi was sentenced by the Appeal court of Riyadh to ten years in prison, a USD 266.000 fine and 1000 lashes, to be administered 50 at a time over 20 weeks for “insulting Islam”;
- I. whereas on 9 January 2015, he was submitted to public lashing as part of the sentence he was condemned to; and whereas it has been reported that the Supreme court has referred back the case to the Court of Appeal in Jeddah for review on 3 February 2015;
- J. whereas Reporters Without Borders awarded Raif Badawi the Netizen Prize for 2014 in recognition to his notable contribution to the defense of online freedom of expression, and whereas Raif Badawi has been nominated for the Nobel peace price;
1. Condemns firmly any form of corporal punishment as an unacceptable and degrading treatment contrary to human dignity and voices concern about States’ use of flogging and strongly calls for its strict abolition;
 2. Appeals to the Saudi authorities to halt the corporal punishment of Raif Badawi and to urgently review his case and sentence;
 3. Stresses the process of judicial reform undertaken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with the view to improve the protection of individual rights, and encourages its fostering;
 4. welcome the creation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) joint parliamentary committee in charge of boosting relations with the European parliament and the adoption of the declaration of human rights for the Arab States of the Gulf at the GCC Summit of Doha of 9 December 2014;
 5. Recalls that freedom of expression online and offline is an essential foundation for democracy, stability and sustainable inclusive development of society and therefore strongly condemns the harassment and imprisonment of journalists and others who are expressing their opinions on the Internet;
 6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

