



Plenary sitting

B8-0466/2016

12.4.2016

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 Pakistan, in particular the attack in Lahore
(2016/2644(RSP))

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B8-0466/2016

European Parliament resolution on Pakistan, in particular the attack in Lahore (2016/2644(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Pakistan,
 - having regard to the statement by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini on the attack in Lahore, Pakistan,
 - having regard to the statement by the Statement of the UN Special Rapporteur,
 - having regard to the HRCP statement of 3 April 2016,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the EU-Pakistan five-year engagement plan of March 2012, containing priorities such as good governance and dialogue on human rights, and to the closely related 2nd EU-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue of 25 March 2014,
 - having regard to the EU guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief adopted on 24 June 2013,
 - having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas at least 72 people died in a suicide bombing in a crowded park in Lahore, Pakistan, on Sunday 27 March 2016; whereas a splinter faction of the Pakistani Taliban, Jamaat ul-Ahrar, has claimed responsibility for the attack, which the group says was directed at Pakistani Christians who were celebrating Easter Sunday in Gulshan-e-Iqbal Park,
- B. whereas the bombing, which took place just by an area of the park designated for women and children, is the latest attack in recent years that has targeted the small yet important Christian community in the majority Muslim nation,
- C. whereas armed groups continued to carry out targeted attacks against civilians, including health workers and civilians affiliated with the government,
- D. whereas religious minorities, both Muslim and non-Muslim, continued to face laws and practices that resulted in discrimination and persecution,
- E. whereas blasphemy laws remained in force, mostly in Punjab province; whereas it has been applied to people of all religions but were disproportionately used against religious minorities, NGOs, minorities, academics and journalists alike, in a sometimes very arbitrary manner, to curtail freedom of expression and opinion,

- F. whereas discrimination against religious minorities of Pakistan was formalized in the country's first Constitution adopted in 1956, and was subsequently reinforced in the 1962 and 1973 revisions of the Constitution,
 - G. whereas for the past several decades, the Pakistani authorities have continuously failed to adequately protect minorities from faith-based violence; whereas even when some governments made pledges to bring perpetrators of faith-based crimes to justice, these promises have remained unfulfilled with regards to crimes committed against non-Muslims,
 - H. whereas death penalty was initially lifted for terrorism-related offences only, but within months, executions for a wider range of crimes were being carried out,
 - I. whereas the executions are a serious stain on Pakistan's human rights record, compounding repeated violations of fair trial standards and other safeguards that must be observed in all death-penalty cases,
 - J. whereas the work environment has grown progressively insecure for human rights defenders, not least because of demonization of civil society organisations and on account of failure to take very obvious corrective measures by the authorities; whereas besides new requirements for registration process the civil society organisations routinely face harassment and threats,
 - K. whereas some journalists and media channels exercised self-censorship for fear of reprisals from the Pakistan Army and armed groups; whereas at least two media workers were killed and six injured in connection with their work,
 - L. whereas the civilian population in FATA continued to be affected by internal armed conflict; whereas the Pakistan Army continued its military operations, started in 2014, against non-state armed groups in North Waziristan and Khyber tribal agency and the Army claimed that over 3,400 militants were killed and at least 21,193 arrested during these operations,
 - M. whereas more than one million people remained displaced as a result of the current and past armed conflict in the northwest,
1. Stands by the side of Pakistan and shares its grief after the horrific attack against the Christian civilian in the park in Lahore; expresses its deepest sympathy to the families of the victims and supports the efforts of the Pakistan Government to stop the violence and bring those responsible to justice;
 2. Strongly condemns the continuing wave of gun and bomb attacks, suicide bombings, kidnappings and other violent acts committed by the terrorist against civilians, minority communities, government and military targets in Pakistan;
 3. Urges the Pakistan Government and its forces to exercise restraint in tackling violence and to ensure that any efforts to tackle such violence are carried out in accordance with the Pakistan Government's obligations under international law;

4. Stresses that the inability of the law enforcement agencies to apprehend, try and punish the perpetrators of earlier targeted attacks creates an environment conducive to further acts of violence; regrets that despite the ongoing military and civilian operation against religious fundamentalists, the elements required for creating a more tolerant environment, remain largely ignored;
5. Regrets the State's failure to fight impunity for such crimes is seen as a tacit approval, and has resulted in rising religious intolerance and more overt acts of discrimination and violence against minorities;
6. Strongly asks to the end of blasphemy law that violate the human right to freedom of expression;
7. Recalls that 2015 saw a dramatic rise in the number of people executed (at least 1,634); remind that the EU considers the death penalty a cruel and inhumane punishment and it calls on Pakistan to ensure for all its citizens full respect of human rights as guaranteed by international conventions to which it is party;
8. Calls on the Pakistan Government and authorities to improve the overall environment in terms of minority and human rights through legislation, also with the enforcement of the existing one, policy changes and administrative reforms on an urgent basis, to protect basic constitutional rights;
9. Is extremely concerned about the omnipresent militarisation of the country, over all sectors of civilian institutions and authorities, which is seriously undermining the democratic system that also has an undeniable negative impact on the rights of individuals and groups; asks therefore that civilian oversight of all military actions must be ensured without exception and progress should be shared with the Pakistani people regularly;
10. Notes with concern that freedom of speech and media, protest, movement and assembly are being violated and curbed on the pretext of 'national security' or 'national interest'; condemns growing overt and covert restrictions and attacks on the news media and expects that media organisations and journalists would be protected in order to preserve their professional integrity and independence;
11. Believes of utmost importance that the security forces are not given a carte blanche and their operations have strict oversight to prevent excesses and ensure accountability; urges the Government that all incidents of death in custody, the so-called encounters and killings by the security forces should be investigated by oversight committees that must also comprise recognised representatives of civil society institutions; calls that all allegations of torture should be investigated by judicial forums and judges should inspect prisoners once they are presented before them, in order to ensure that they do not suffer torture at the hands of the security forces;
12. Regrets that despite the efforts in recent years to enact legislation protecting women from violence, laws remained in force under which female rape victims can be convicted for adultery; recalls that women have continued to be denied equality and protection in law, a situation exacerbated by factors including the absence of legislation against incest and a gender-insensitive criminal justice system; urges the

Government of Pakistan to take the necessary measures to prevent the occurrence of attacks and threats against educational institutions which undermine fundamental rights, in particular the women and girls' right to education, and to ensure that perpetrators of violent acts of are promptly investigated, prosecuted and punished;

13. Urges that discrimination against those living in FATA should come to an end without further delay, that the jurisdiction of superior courts should be extended to FATA and its citizens should be able to secure their fundamental rights;
14. 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.