



Plenary sitting

B8-0467/2016

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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B8-0467/2016

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, notably of 15 January 2015, 27 November 2014 and 17 April 2014

-having regard to the Statement by HR/VP Federica Mogherini on the attack in Lahore of 27 March 2016

- having regard to the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, Gabriela Knaul, of 4 April 2013 and of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances on its mission to Pakistan of 26 February 2013

- having regard to the EU guidelines on the death penalty as revised on 12 April 2013,

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948,

- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 16 December 1966,

- having regard to UN General Assembly resolution 68/178 and UN Human Rights Council resolution 25/7 on international human rights while countering terrorism,

- having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,

- Whereas on 27 March a suicide bomb attack in the playground of a park in Lahore killed over 70 people and wounded some 300;
- Whereas the break-away Taliban faction Jamaat ul-Ahar claimed responsibility for the attack, explaining that the target were Christians, many of whom were enjoying their Easter festivities in the park; whereas however the majority of the dead and wounded are Sunni Muslims, among them many women and children;
- Whereas since mid-2014 the Pakistani government has been leading a large military operation to wipe out the Taliban strongholds in parts of FATA, reportedly killing 3000 militants and arresting thousands more; whereas after the Lahore massacre, the security forces arrested over 200 people;
- Whereas the bomb blast took place at the same time as thousands of demonstrators were marching through Lahore in protest against the pending execution of Mumtaz Quadri, the policeman and body guard who killed the governor of Punjab Province because he had called for a reform of the blasphemy law; whereas tens of thousands of people attended Quadri's funeral after he was hanged, celebrating him as a hero, and pictures were circulated on social media showing senior members of Pakistan's elite police forces praying at his grave;

- Whereas some extremist groups are allowed to develop their ideology and activities unhampered such as certain student unions at the universities or the Khatm-e-Nubuwwat Lawyer' Forum, which is reportedly the driving force behind the rise in prosecutions for blasphemy charges in the Pakistani courts and against any attempts by legislators to reform the law; whereas its leader Ghulam Mustafa Chaudhry has also been the defense lawyer for Quadri and mobilising public support for him, while the judge who first convicted Quadri had to flee the country after death threats;
- Whereas when it comes to government critical activities, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan is deploring that "freedom of speech and media, protest, movement and assembly are being violated and curbed on the pretext of 'national security' or 'national interest'" and the democratic system is being undermined by the increasing militarisation of civilian authority;
- Whereas Reporters Without Borders in its 2015 Press Freedom Index declared Pakistan a 'dangerous' country for journalists, ranking it 159th in a list of 180 countries;
- Whereas according to statistics of the National Human Rights Commission, nearly 1100 women have become victims of 'honor' killings in 2015 alone;
- Whereas according to the PEW Research Centre, Pakistan is among the countries with the highest level of social hostility to religious minorities, notably Ahmadis, Christians, Shiites, Hindus, Sikhs;
- Whereas after the school massacre by Taliban insurgents in December 2014, the government of Pakistan re-introduced the death penalty after a six-year moratorium, first only for terrorist activities but later for all capital crimes; whereas by the end of 2015 Pakistan had executed 326 people – the highest number ever recorded and the third highest in the world;
- Expresses its grave concern over the recurring bomb attacks in Pakistan and expresses its condolences to the bereaved families of the Lahore attack and the people of Pakistan
- Is seriously worried about the continued radicalization of certain parts of Pakistani society and the increasing persecution of people who raise their voice in defense of pluralism and respect for fundamental rights;
- Welcomes reform initiatives by the government such as the bill to criminalize child marriage and the act to protect women from violence and harassment, the unblocking of YouTube, the decision to announce in the future holidays for religious festivals of the minorities, as well as the personal efforts of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to visit a Hindi religious event; urges the government to further increase its efforts to create a social climate which welcomes minorities and diversity of thought;
- recalls in this context the National Action Plan and the promised and urgently needed reforms of the madrassas, notably the review of the curricula, government action against hate speech, as well as the outstanding police and judicial reform;
- Expresses its concern over revelations in the so-called Panama papers that implicate

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's immediate family in tax fraud; recalls that the Pakistani administration and development is hampered by one of the lowest tax collection rates in the world and hopes that this incident will lead to concrete steps in order to increase the tax base of the government and reforms that would bring about more social justice in the country;

4. Expresses its concern over the large freedom to operate granted to the security forces and calls on government to assure better oversight to prevent excesses; urges the competent authorities to undertake a prompt and impartial investigation into deaths in custody and so-called 'encounters' and killings by the security forces, as well as allegations of torture and to prosecute suspected perpetrators of extra-judicial killings and torture;

6. Strongly criticizes the sad record of executions in Pakistan and calls on the government and Parliament to reinstate the former moratorium and to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR aiming at the abolition of the death penalty;

7. Calls on the Government of Pakistan to issue an immediate and open invitation to the UN special rapporteurs, notably the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, the one on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, and on freedom of religion or belief;

8. Calls on the Government of Pakistan to fully support the work of the national human rights Commission and to grant the financial support needed for the office to function properly;

9. underlines that under the reformed GSP+ the EU can no longer limit itself to UN/ International Labour Organisation reporting systems but will have to consider the "Effective implementation of conventions" and beneficiaries will have to prove that they are implementing their obligations concerning human rights, labour, environmental and governance standards, and that such proof is necessary for the ongoing provision of GSP+; Calls on the Commission to discuss with the Pakistani government concerns as to whether the situation in the country poses serious questions in respect of the GSP+ preferences;

11. In view of the serious human rights violations and the prevailing climate of intolerance towards minorities in Pakistan, strongly criticizes the recent deportation of Pakistani citizens from Greece to Turkey and demands that all cases of Pakistani asylum seekers be scrutinized individually as is enshrined in the Geneva Conventions;

12. calls the VP/HR to work with the Member States to ensure the adoption of Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on the human rights situation in Pakistan;

13. 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, the Government and Parliament of Pakistan.