



Plenary sitting

B8-0602/2016

10.5.2016

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 the situation in Gambia
(2016/2693(RSP))

Hilde Vautmans, Petras Auštrevičius, Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Dita Charanzová, Marielle de Sarnez, Gérard Deprez, Martina Dlabajová, Nedzhmi Ali, Nathalie Griesbeck, Antanas Guoga, Marian Harkin, Filiz Hyusmenova, Ivan Jakovčić, Petr Ježek, Kaja Kallas, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Javier Nart, Urmas Paet, Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruiz, Carolina Punset, Jozo Radoš, Frédérique Ries, Robert Rochefort, Marietje Schaake, Jasenko Selimovic, Hannu Takkula, Pavel Telička, Ramon Tremosa i Balcells, Ivo Vajgl, Johannes Cornelis van Baalen, Paavo Väyrynen, Valentinas Mazuronis
on behalf of the ALDE Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Gambia
(2016/2693(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Gambia and the Sahel region,
 - having regards to its resolution of 12 March 2015 on the EU's priorities for the UN Human Rights Council in 2015
 - having regards to the statement by the Spokesperson of European Union External Action services on recent violence in The Gambia on 17 April 2016,
 - having regards to the statement of Ban Ki-moon on 17 April 2016;
 - having regard to the annual report of the European Union on human rights and democracy, adopted by the Council on 22 June 2015,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions of 19 January 2015 on the DRC,
 - having regard to the Cotonou Partnership Agreement signed in June 2000,
 - having regard to the guidelines of the European Union on human rights activists and the guidelines of the European Union in the field of Human Rights on freedom of expression online and offline,
 - having regard to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
 - having regard to the African Charter on Human Rights and Peoples' Rights, which was ratified by the DRC in 1982,
 - having regard to Rule 135(5) of its Rules of Procedure.
- A. Whereas peaceful protest, on April 14 in Serekunda, a suburb of the capital Banjul, calling for electoral reform has led to violent reactions by the Gambian security forces and arbitrary detention of protestors, among them several Members of the United Democratic Party (UDP);
- B. Whereas Solo Sandeng, the National Organizing Secretary of UDP, died in detention shortly after his arrest in suspicious circumstances;
- C. Whereas members of the UDP gathered again on April 16 to demand justice for Sandeng's death and the release of other members of their party; whereas the reaction of the police was to fire tear gas at the demonstrators and arrested other UDP executive members, including Darboe, the party leader, as well as a number of other protesters and witnesses;

- D. Whereas another UDP member, Fatoumata Jawara, is also detained and is believed to be suffering from serious injuries for which the cause remain unclear;
- E. Whereas the oppression of the media is particularly severe, in order to silence criticism; whereas dozens of journalists have fled Gambia in the last two decades; whereas the case of the manager of an independent radio station, Alagie Abdoulie Ceesay, remains extremely worrying;
- E bis whereas the EU aid since 1994 is around 133 million euros; whereas, under the 11th European Development Fund, indicative 33 million euros have been allocated for agricultural issues, food security and nutrition;
- E ter whereas The Gambia is one of the fifteen poorest counties in the world, with a quarter of its population facing chronic food insecurity;
- F. Whereas Gambia has taken on commitments under international conventions and the Cotonou agreement;
- G. Whereas Gambia has not implemented the judgments of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Court of Justice in three cases related to journalists: the enforced disappearance of Ebrima Manneh in 2010; the torture of Musa Saïdykhan in 2010; and the unlawful killing of the president of the Gambia Press Union Deyda Hydera, in 2014;
- H. Whereas Yahya Jammeh, won power in a military coup in 1994; whereas he was elected president in 1996 since re-elected 3 times, under disputed circumstances; whereas he was designated by his party as candidate for a 5th mandate;
- I. Whereas the APRC, the party of Mr Jammeh has win the last legislative elections, with 43 representatives out of 48; whereas 5 of them are directly nominated by the president, whereas those elections where boycotted by the 6 main opposition parties;
- J. Whereas Presidential elections are foreseen on December 1st 2016 and legislative election should be held on April 6 2017;
- Jbis whereas The Gambia president banned female genital mutilation (FGM) in November 2015 follow by a bill passed last January; whereas 76% of women have been victims of it in The Gambia;
1. Condemns vigorously the violent repression of peaceful demonstrations; condemns the unjustified detention of protesters, calls for their release especially of those who need medical care;
 2. Is concern of the death in detention of Solo Sandeng, sends its condolences to his relatives; expresses its concern on the testimonies of torture and ill treatments of other prisoners; calls on the authorities to conduct an immediate, thorough and independent investigation;
 3. Recalls that freedom of expression, association and assembly are the basis of a dynamic political and democratic life; Strongly condemns the increasing restrictions of democratic

space and targeted repression of members of the opposition, civil society and media;

4. Expresses its deep concerns on Gambia's repressive treatment of the media, according to Reporters Without Borders, it has led to a climate of intimidation ahead of elections scheduled for December 2016;
5. Recalls that ECOWAS has the power to impose sanctions on The Gambia for non-compliance with judgements, but has not initiated any processes to sanction foreseen under Article 66 of the ECOWAS Treaty;
6. Recalls that the full participation of the opposition and independent civil society in the independent and free national election as an important factor for the success of the elections; recalls that ECOWAS refused to send observers to the last poll in 2011, citing intimidation of the opposition and the electorate;
- 6 new calls on the government of Gambia to engage in genuine dialogue with all opposition political parties about legislative and policy reforms that will ensure a free and fair election and guarantee respect for respect freedom of association and assembly, in line with Gambia's international obligations;
7. Urges the EU Delegation to monitor the developments and to use all appropriate tools and instruments to support human rights defenders and pro-democratic movements;
8. Recalls strongly that good governance requires rule of law, able to be accountable and transparent without corruption nor intimidation or arbitrary arrests;
9. Recalls its deep concern about the recent increase in the number of discriminatory laws and practices, and of acts of violence against individuals, on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity; encourages close monitoring of the situation of LGBTI people,
10. Recalls President Yahya Jammeh has declared the Gambia "an Islamic state" in December 2015; expresses its concerns on the attempt of President Jammeh to obliged women working in public administration covering their hair during working hours as a sign of radicalization of the Gambian authorities, this decision was withdrawn after great protest;
11. Expresses its concern on the increasing number of young people leaving their country; acknowledges the fact that almost 8500 Gambian people reached the Italian coast in 2015;
12. 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 African Union, the President, the Prime Minister and the Parliament of the Gambia, the Secretary General of the United Nations, the special representative of the United Nations responsible for the issue of sexual violence in times of conflict, the United Nations security Council and the Council of human rights of the United Nations and to the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly.