



Plenary sitting

B8-0423/2017

13.6.2017

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, notably the situation of human rights defenders and the death penalty
(2017/2723(RSP))

Jozo Radoš, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Petras Auštrevičius, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Johannes Cornelis van Baalen, Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Dita Charanzová, Gérard Deprez, María Teresa Giménez Barbat, Martina Dlabajová, Marian Harkin, Ivan Jakovčić, Louis Michel, Javier Nart, Urmas Paet, Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruiz, Frédérique Ries, Robert Rochefort, Hannu Takkula, Marietje Schaake, Jasenko Selimovic, Pavel Telička, Ivo Vajgl, Paavo Väyrynen, Ramon Tremosa i Balcells, Cecilia Wikström, Nedzhmi Ali, Valentinas Mazuronis
on behalf of the ALDE Group

European Parliament resolution on Pakistan, notably the situation of human rights defenders and the death penalty (2017/2723(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Pakistan,
 - having regard to Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the EU guidelines on the death penalty as revised on 12 April 2013,
 - having regard to the EU statement on European and World Day against the Death Penalty on 14 October 2016
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on Pakistan of 18 July 2016,
 - having regard to the EU-Pakistan five-year engagement plan of March 2012, which contains priorities such as good governance and dialogue on human rights, as well as the closely related 2nd EU-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue of 25 March 2014,
 - having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. Whereas until 2015, Pakistan had placed a moratorium on the death penalty but reinstated it in 2015 following the horrific attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar in December 2014; the government has since executed more than 380 prisoners.
- B. Whereas Pakistan has one of the largest death row populations in the world, with around 7,595 prisoners on death row in Pakistan. Sources indicate that approximately 51-65 women are under sentence of death in Pakistan.
- C. Whereas not all jurisdictions in Pakistan comply with the law that prohibits sentences of death on offenders under the age of 18 at the time of the crime and because only about a third of births in Pakistan are registered, NGOs believe that juveniles continue to be sentenced to death in Pakistan.
- D. Whereas death row prisoners are often held in squalid conditions, with cells built for one or two people now holding six or more and confinement being up to 23 hours a day; whereas these conditions violate human rights as detailed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Articles 6, 7, and 10, which protect the right to life, prohibit torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and the right to humane treatment while incarcerated.

- E. Whereas, as of May 30th, the organisation Reprieve estimates there have been at least 44 executions in Pakistan in 2017.
 - F. Whereas the EU remains fully committed to continuing its dialogue and engagement with Pakistan under the 5-year Engagement Plan and its replacement;
 - G. Whereas there have been several cases in Pakistan over recent decades where accusations of blasphemy and other smear campaigns have led to threats, attacks and even the murder of journalists, activists and other human rights defenders.
 - H. Whereas on 10 June a Pakistani counter-terrorism court sentenced Taimoor Raza to death for allegedly committing blasphemy on Facebook, following a wider crackdown on perceived dissent on social media in recent months;
 - I. Whereas Pakistani authorities have asked Twitter and Facebook to help identify users sharing blasphemous material and have distributed text messages encouraging Pakistanis to report citizens; whereas in March 2017, the Prime Minister ordered a ban on all blasphemous material online;
 - J. Whereas blasphemy accusations are a direct incitement to violence in Pakistan and dozens of people have been killed by mob and vigilante violence on mere accusations;
 - K. Whereas according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 67 journalists and media workers have been killed in Pakistan since 1992.
1. Expresses its constant opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances; notes with grave concern the dramatic increase in the use of the death penalty in Pakistan amid deteriorating prison conditions, including, highly regrettably, against child offenders and persons with a mental or physical disability, and calls for a moratorium on capital punishment to be reinstated with a view of abolishing the death penalty in Pakistan; further condemns the recent death sentence against Taimoor Raza for allegedly committing blasphemy on social media, the harshest verdict yet for such a crime;
 2. Highlights its concern that in Pakistan many death sentences are handed down after trials that do not meet international fair trial standards and violate Article 10(A) of Pakistan's constitution, which calls for a fair trial and due process for the determination of a person's civil rights and obligations in any criminal charge.
 3. Is concerned about the continued use of blasphemy laws in Pakistan and believes that this increases the climate of religious intolerance, therefore calls on the Pakistani government to abolish criminal blasphemy provisions, which are incompatible with international human rights law; calls upon the authorities to ensure the proper and swift delivery of

justice in all such cases, in particular notes the case of Asia Bibi; calls on the Government of Pakistan to take a stronger position in condemning vigilantism towards accused blasphemers; urges the Pakistani government to not use the blasphemy rhetoric itself;

4. Calls on the Pakistani government to take urgent action to protect the lives and rights of journalists, bloggers, civil society activists and other human rights defenders who face constant harassment, intimidation, threats and violent attacks. The work of journalists, bloggers, civil society organizations and human rights defenders is crucial to any free and just society and their activities are not just protected under Pakistan's obligations under international law, but also under Pakistan's Constitution.
5. Expresses concern about the request by the Pakistani authorities to Twitter and Facebook to disclose information about their users in order to identify individuals suspected of blasphemy and to prosecute or extradite them;
6. Expresses its concerns with regard to the situation of human rights in Pakistan in general, especially the freedom of religion or belief, the rights of persons belonging to minorities, the rights of women, and the rights of children.
7. Welcomes Pakistan's adoption of a Human Rights Action Plan and its decision to strengthen its Human Rights Institutions; Calls for these to be translated into tangible progress in terms of respecting, protecting and promoting all human rights, as well as through strengthening the rule of law.
8. Recalls that the effective implementation of international conventions is an essential requirement under the GSP+ scheme.
9. Reaffirms its commitment to support Pakistan, as a valued partner, in its implementation of international obligations; encourages Pakistan to follow up on the recommendations by several EU Election Observation Missions to improve the electoral process, well in time before the next elections planned for 2018 and offers its assistance in this regard.
10. Expresses satisfaction at the progress made in the implementation of the Pakistan-EU 5-year Engagement Plan, but expresses hope that the new Strategic Engagement Plan to be finalised in 2017 will be ambitious and help to strengthen ties between the European Union and Pakistan.
11. Calls on the Commission, High Representative/ Vice-President Federica Mogherini, the European External Action Service and the Council to fully engage with the Government of Pakistan in calling for an end to capital punishment in Pakistan; calls on the High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini to regularly inform the European Parliament on the progress in these bilateral efforts;

12. 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, the Presidency of the UN Security Council, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the Government and Parliament of Pakistan.