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*Plenary sitting*

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**B8-0642/2017**

14.11.2017

## **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 Freedom of expression in Sudan, notably the case of Mohamed Zine El Abidine  
(2017/2961(RSP))

**Cristian Dan Preda, Tunne Kelam, Tomáš Zdechovský, Pavel Svoboda, Lefteris Christoforou, Dubravka Šuica, Eduard Kukan, Marijana Petir, Elisabetta Gardini, Jarosław Wałęsa, Laima Liucija Andrikienė, Luděk Niedermayer, Lorenzo Cesa, Mairead McGuinness, David McAllister, Jaromír Štětina, Michaela Šojdrová, Romana Tomc, Željana Zovko, Ivan Štefanec, Patricija Šulin, Giovanni La Via, Manolis Kefalogiannis, Maurice Ponga, Adam Szejnfeld, Joachim Zeller, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Sandra Kalniete, Milan Zver, Roberta Metsola, Seán Kelly, Deirdre Clune, José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Lars Adaktusson, Andrey Kovatchev, Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso, Anna Záborská**  
on behalf of the PPE Group

**B8-0642/2017**

**European Parliament resolution on Freedom of expression in Sudan, notably the case of Mohamed Zine El Abidine (2017/2961(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Sudan,
  - having regard to its resolution on the United Nations Human Rights Council sessions of 13 March 2017,
  - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
  - having regards to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
  - having regards to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights,
  - having regard to the Cotonou Agreement,
  - having regard to the Kampala declaration of the Pan African Conference on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information of 26 March 2017,
  - having regard to the statement of the United Nations Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Sudan, Aristide Nononsi, following his mission to Sudan 11-21 May 2017,
  - having regard to the visit to Sudan on 22-23 October by Commissioner Stylianides,
  - having regard to the declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the occasion of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, 2 November 2017,
  - having regard to the Reporters without borders 2017 World Press Freedom Index,
  - having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas an article by Mohamed Zine al-Abidine published 23 February 2012 in the al-Tayar newspaper allegedly criticised the corruption in the family of Sudanese President Al-Bashir;
- B. whereas the Sudanese National Intelligence and Security service( NISS) filed charges against Mohamed Zine al-Abidine and his editor-in-chief Osman Mirgani;

- C. whereas a Sudanese court sentenced Mohamed Zine al-Abidine to a suspended sentence with a five year probation period on charges of having violated the journalism code of ethics 23 October 2017;
- D. whereas the Editor-in- Chief of the al-Tayar newspaper, Osman Mirgani, was sentenced to pay a fine of 10,000 Sudanese pounds, or serve a six months prison sentence, on the same charges, and was released after the fine was paid by the Sudanese journalists' union;
- E. whereas Mohamed Zine al-Abidine and Osman Mirgani's lawyer, Abbas Ibrahim Ahmed, has stated his intention to appeal the verdict against them;
- F. whereas it is reported that the Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) questions and detains journalists and often confiscates newspaper issues;
- G. whereas a free, independent and impartial media constitute one of the essential foundations of a democratic society;
- H. whereas Reporters without Borders ranks Sudan amongst the least free countries, at 174 out of 180, in the 2017 World Press Freedom Index;
1. Expresses its deep concern over the sentencing by the Press Court in Khartoum of Mohamed Zine al-Abidine on the 23 October 2017 to a suspended sentence with a five year probation period, and calls on the Sudanese authorities to immediately review all charges against him;
  2. Is deeply worried about the freedom of expression in Sudan, the ongoing censorship and seizures of newspapers, and the increased restrictions on journalists from freely expressing their opinion in Sudan;
  3. Deplores the numerous reports regarding the Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Service's (NISS) repeated violations of media freedom and continued harassment of journalists and urges the Sudanese authorities to bring the powers and methods of the NISS in line with international standards;
  4. Believes that free, independent, impartial media constitute one of the essential foundations of a democratic society, where open debates play a crucial role; calls on the EU to intensify its efforts to promote freedom of expression through its external policies and instruments;
  5. Urges the Sudanese authorities to bring an immediate end to all forms of harassment, intimidation and attacks on journalists and advocates of freedom of online and offline expression, and to undertake democratic reforms as a means for ensuring the protection and promotion of human rights in the country, including freedom of expression;
  6. Reaffirms the fundamental right to freedom of expression and access to online and offline information;
  7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and

the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/ Vice-President of the Commission, the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the African Union Commission and the Pan-African Parliament and the Sudanese Government.