



Plenary sitting

B8-0160/2018

13.3.2018

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 arrest of human rights defenders in Sudan, notably the case of case of Sakharov Prize laureate Salih Mahmoud Osman (2018/2631(RSP))

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on behalf of the PPE Group

European Parliament resolution on the arrest of human rights defenders in Sudan, notably the case of case of Sakharov Prize laureate Salih Mahmoud Osman (2018/2631(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on situation in Sudan,
 - having regard to the Local EU Statement on the release of political prisoners of 20 February 2018,
 - having regard to the Local Statement by EU Resident Member States in Sudan of 31 January 2018,
 - having regard to the Local statement by the Heads of Mission of EU Embassies on the recent protests in Khartoum of 11 January 2018,
 - having regard to the report of 27 July 2017 of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Sudan,
 - having regard to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights,
 - having regard to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
 - having regards to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
 - having regard to the EU Guidelines on freedom of religion and belief,
 - having regard to the Cotonou Agreement,
 - having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas in Sudan, human rights violations and abuses continue to spread in total impunity, with security forces constantly targeting civilians, human rights defenders, opposition members, students, political activists and journalists; whereas exactions committed include unlawful killings, rape, looting, arbitrary detentions, ill-treatment and torture, and the use of lethal force against peaceful demonstrators;
- B. whereas freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly are denied by national authorities; whereas the National Intelligence Security Service (NISS) regularly cracks down on the activities and events held by civil society organisations and opposition parties;

- C. whereas starting on 6 January 2018, a series of peaceful protests against austerity measures and the rise of commodity prices have been violently repressed by government forces, including the use of tear gas and beatings; whereas human rights group estimate that around 140 human rights defenders, opposition leaders and members, students and women rights activists have been unlawfully arrested and detained since January;
- D. whereas the human right defender and 2007 Sakharov Prize laureate Salih Mahmoud Osman was arrested in his office by NISS forces on 1 February 2018 and has been held without charge since then; whereas he was recently transferred to Dabak prison, 20 km north of Khartoum, and authorities have refused to provide information on his health and denied visits to his lawyer and family;
- E. whereas following the arrest of Salih Mahmoud Osman, the EU Head of Delegation to Sudan initiated a demarche to the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and an appeal was made by EUSR Lambridinis to the 37th session of UNHRC on 27 February;
- F. whereas on 18 February, the government announced the release of 80 detainees; whereas these numbers were contested by local human rights observers; whereas the head of the NISS conditioned the release of other detainees to their promise to stop organising protests; whereas these declarations are contrary to Sudan's international human rights obligations;
- G. whereas to date, at least 60 people are estimated to remain in detention, including Amjed Fareed, Ahmed Jadeen and Mohammed Abdulmonim; whereas all political detainees are at serious risk of ill-treatment and torture;
- H. whereas Sudan is ranked 174th out of 180 in the World Press Freedom Index; whereas press and media freedoms continue to be severely restricted by authorities and the Press and Publication Act which provides restrictions such as censorship, seizure and confiscation of newspapers, closures of media outlets and internet cuts;
- I. whereas, according to Reporters Without Borders, 18 journalists have been arrested since the start of protests in January 2018 and the issues of at least 15 independent and opposition newspapers have been seized;
- J. whereas following its delegation to Sudan in December 2017, the DROI sub-committee of the European Parliament pointed at the good cooperation demonstrated by Sudanese counterparts and the willingness of the Sudanese government to re-engage with the international community;
- K. whereas the delegation also called on the Sudanese government to bring its national legislation into conformity with Sudan's international human rights commitments and raised concerns on the restrictive laws and constant burdens limiting CSOs' room for action;

- L. whereas the right to freedom of religion continues to be restricted and the law criminalises apostasy, blasphemy and conversion from Islam to other religions; whereas repeated threats and intimidations against church leaders and Christian communities are reported; whereas on 11 February, the Khartoum State authorities have arbitrarily demolished, without due process, the Evangelical Church in Al-Haj Yousif neighbourhood;
- M. whereas despite recent improvements in the security situation, the situation in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan remains dire; whereas in Darfur, government forces continue to target civilians, conduct indiscriminate bombings and unlawful attacks amounting to crimes against humanity;
- N. whereas war crimes and the massive humanitarian crisis in Sudan affect the stability of the region as a whole; whereas 4,8 million people are currently in need of humanitarian assistance, including 3,1 million in the province of Darfur; whereas 3,3 million people are internally displaced and 3,4 million people are seriously food insecure, the majority of them being children;
- O. whereas in October 2017, the EU announced a €106 million support package, including €46 million in humanitarian assistance for people affected by forced displacement, under nutrition, disease outbreaks and recurrent extreme climatic conditions;
1. Remains deeply concerned at the continued violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Sudan, and notably by the recent demonstrations involving an excessive use of force by the Sudanese security forces against peaceful protesters;
 2. Calls on the Sudanese government to guarantee in all circumstances the exercise of freedom of expression, association and assembly, and to put an end to all acts of harassment and intimidation against human rights defenders, journalists, students and opposition members, in accordance with the Sudanese Constitution;
 3. Acknowledges the recent release of a number of political prisoners, including Mudawi Ibrahim, Naser Aldeen Mukhtar Mohamed, Amal Habani, Rawa Jaafar Bakhit, Hassan Hassan Khalifa and Mohamed Abdallah Aldouma;
 4. Calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Salih Mahmoud Osman, as well as all other persons arrested for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression, association and assembly;
 5. Condemns any practice of torture and ill-treatment and reminds the Sudanese authorities of their obligation to ensure that the right to fair trial is respected and that the conditions of detention comply with international standards; calls on Sudan to

ratify the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

6. Urges the Sudanese authorities to conduct an immediate, independent and impartial investigation into all allegations of excessive use of force against peaceful protestors as well as ill-treatment of detainees by the security forces and NISS and to hold those responsible to account;
7. Stresses that free and independent media are essential to guarantee an informed, active and engaged population; condemns the regular shutdowns and bans of independent media outlet and newspapers and urges the authorities to guarantee the rights of local civil society and media;
8. Reaffirms that freedom of religion, conscience or belief is a universal human right that needs to be protected everywhere and for everyone; demands that the Sudanese government repeal any legal provisions that discriminate against individuals for their religious beliefs and stop arbitrarily demolishing religious minorities' places of worship;
9. Reiterates its deep concern regarding the alarming humanitarian situation in the country; welcomes EU efforts in favour of the affected population and to improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable groups;
10. Calls on the EU and its Member States to continue their commitment to supporting the efforts of the African Union to bring peace to Sudan and the Sudanese people; in this regard expresses its support to the renewal of the mandate of the African Union - United Nations mission in Darfur (UNAMID) until June 2018;
11. 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 Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the African Union Commission and the Pan-African Parliament, the Sudanese Government and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.