



Plenary sitting

B8-0173/2018

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 mercy killings in Uganda
(2018/2632(RSP))

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on behalf of the S&D Group

B8-0173/2018

**European Parliament resolution on on mercy killings in Uganda
(2018/2632(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard its previous resolutions
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- having regard the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- having regard to the United Nations Convention against Torture (UNCAT)
- having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights,
- -having regard to the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement ('Cotonou Agreement')
- having regard to the Constitution of Uganda,
- -having regard the ACP – EU JPA report on the inclusion of people with disabilities in the developing countries of 23 November 2011, Togo
- having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), adopted in 2006, and in particular to Article 32 thereof, which states that all parties must include disability and persons with disabilities in their international cooperation efforts,
- having regard to UN Human Rights Council’s latest resolutions on the human rights of persons with disabilities of 14/04/2014 and 14/07/2014,
- having regard to the EU Guidance Note on Disability and Development for EU Delegations and Services,
- having regard to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) press releases of 19 September 2017, entitled ‘Ground-breaking step to tackle impunity for witchcraft related human rights violations’,
- -having regard the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs adopted in New York on the 25th September 2015
- having regard to Uganda’s review report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda entitled “Ensuring no one is left behind” of July 2016 and presented to the HLPF (UN), New York
- having regard to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. whereas ritual killings of children are taking place in Uganda each year ; whereas many, in particular among the rich elite, believe sacrificial rituals can bring quick wealth and health; whereas many women have been also brutally killed in the name of such a “sacrifice”
- B. whereas witchdoctors perform the brutal ritual that destroys the lives of the children who are dying in agony and torture; whereas survivors are usually physically and mentally damaged for life as are their families;
- C. whereas in Uganda, the false association between child sacrifice and wealth acquisition poses a severe threat to children’s life;
- D. whereas the government of Uganda created a National Action Plan to stop the murders and approved a bill to regulate healers, some of whom were practising as real doctors; whereas the businessmen who pay thousands of dollars for the sick rituals are rarely prosecuted because witch doctors refuse to give up their clients; whereas the majority of the witchdoctors performing the ritual killings are not prosecuted either
- E. whereas other countries in Africa reported to be practising child sacrifice include Tanzania, Nigeria, Swaziland, Liberia, Botswana, South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe; whereas albino children and multiple births are also considered in some ethnic groups as evil spirits
- F. whereas outrageous cases of mercy killings of disabled children are also taking place in some areas of the country because of the belief that they are better off dead than having to endure a painful and incurable disability and are in particular seen as a burden for their parents who are marked by poverty and social stigma and rejected by the society;
- G. whereas there are no official numbers available as neither the police nor the justice system in Uganda investigate the phenomenon, whereas the lack of data makes the fight against this practice difficult;
- H. whereas according to the Uganda Population and Housing Census Report 2014, for the population aged 2 years and above the disability prevalence rate was 12.4 percent while the equivalent for 5 years and above was close to 14 percent;
- I. whereas the government of Uganda has a number of general laws and policies that contain clauses on disability; whereas the country has disability-specific legislation;

- J. whereas in April 2016, Uganda’s record on the implementation of the CRPD was reviewed by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, whereas the Committee expressed concerns about the fact that legislation and policies fail to provide protection for the rights of children with disabilities; whereas the Committee observes with particular concern harmful practices and sexual abuse of women with disabilities;
- K. whereas there is a lack of information to make the general public aware of cultural practices that stigmatize and hinder the development of persons with disabilities to enjoy rights like all other persons in society;
- L. whereas disability tends to disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, where the likelihood of disability increases with the incidence of poverty; whereas disability is therefore a development issue;
- M. whereas Uganda has committed to the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals; whereas the country presented its voluntary implementation report to the HLPF in July 2016 in New York; whereas there are 11 explicit references to persons with disabilities in the 2030 Agenda, and disaggregation of data by disability is a core principle;
- N. whereas despite the progress made Uganda still has significant room for improvement in the sustainable development agenda as its economy is still heavily reliant on natural resources and agriculture; whereas the current demographic structure implies a high dependency ratio and low domestic savings;
1. Expresses its utmost concern over the brutal ritual killings of children and “mercy” killings of disabled children in Uganda and calls for outrageous acts of violence, cruelty and torture towards children to be ended immediately;
 2. Expresses its deep concern about persisting discrimination against persons with disabilities, including in particular persons with albinism, persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, and on other grounds, such as gender identity and sexual orientation
 3. Strongly urges the government to conduct an immediate investigation into those crimes and take legal action against those responsible, to bring them to justice and hold them accountable;

4. Calls on the authorities of Uganda and all countries affected by ritual and mercy killings of children to commit to tackling the harmful superstitious beliefs perpetuating the targeting of children
5. Recalls that the primary responsibility of a state is to protect its citizens, including vulnerable groups; calls the Ugandan authorities to protect all children on its territory, to ensure their rights are defended as well as to amend the Children's Act in line with the CRPD in order to mainstream rights of children with disabilities across all programmes and provide necessary budget and resources for their protection;
6. Calls for quality support services to families of children with disabilities in both urban and rural areas, as well as for sufficient financial support and benefits for families to care for their disabled child and to ensure the availability and effective dissemination of information on services and benefits, and training courses for parents and care-givers of children with disability so they are equipped to facilitate children's participation in the community;
7. Stresses the importance of an increased awareness of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities, especially families whose children are disabled, with the aim of combating stigma which can lead to discrimination against persons with disabilities among the public in general, and in particular in rural and urban areas;
8. Urges the government of Uganda to implement measures aimed at promoting the right of children with disabilities to be consulted in all matters concerning their lives and at enabling them to receive assistance appropriate to their age and disability; to provide essential community-based services, including accessibility to education and health care,
9. Urges the authorities to ensure registration of all children with disabilities at birth
10. Welcomes the creation in 2009 of the Equal Opportunities Commission Act that aims at promoting equal opportunities for marginalised groups, including persons with disabilities;
11. Welcomes the creation of the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) under the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda; calls on the UHRC to develop a concrete national plan to guide the execution of its monitoring function

12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative/Vice-President for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the President of the Republic of Uganda, the Speaker of the Ugandan Parliament, the East African Legislative Assembly and the African Union and its institutions.