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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0138/2019**

22.10.2019

## 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 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on Egypt  
(2019/2880(RSP))

**Hannah Neumann, Saskia Bricmont, Katrin Langensiepen, Margrete Auken, Grace O'Sullivan, Heidi Hautala, Michael Bloss, Caroline Roose, Ernest Urtasun, Salima Yenbou, Alice Kuhnke, Viola Von Cramon-Taubadel, François Alfonsi, Damien Carême, Jutta Paulus, Mounir Satouri, Karima Delli, Tineke Strik, Ciarán Cuffe, Yannick Jadot, Gina Dowding, Catherine Rowett, David Cormand, Michèle Rivasi**  
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

**European Parliament resolution on Egypt  
(637.879(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Egypt, in particular of 13 December 2018,
  - having regard to the EU Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on Egypt of August 2013 and February 2014,
  - having regard to the EU-Egypt Association Agreement and the EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities 2017-2020,
  - having regard to the EU Guidelines on the Death Penalty, on Torture and Ill-treatment, Freedom of Expression and on Human Rights Defenders,
  - having regard to the Constitution of Egypt, notably article 93 on the binding character of international human rights law,
  - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN Convention against Torture to which Egypt is a party,
  - having regard to the statement by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet on the protests in Egypt of 27 September 2019 and the briefing on Egypt by the Spokesperson for the High Commissioner of 18 October 2019,
  - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. Whereas the Egyptian authorities are engaged in a heavy-handed response to a series of peaceful demonstrations initiated on 20 September 2019 across the country, in relation to a range of political and socio-economic demands; whereas the scale of the repression has been denounced by civil society groups as the most brutal crackdown of the past 5 years, with the reported arrest of over 4,300 people, including at least 114 women and 111 minors; whereas the majority of those arrested, remain in detention, pending investigation for terrorism-related crimes in relation to the protests; whereas prominent journalists, human rights defenders, political opposition figures are included among those detained; whereas a number of EU citizens were also detained;
- B. Whereas local and international civil society has documented the use of excessive violence by the police to disperse the protestors, as well as many cases of forcible disappearance, arbitrary arrest and the blockage of media in response to the wave of protests;
- C. Whereas the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has expressed her serious concerns about these widespread arrests and has called on the Egyptian authorities to respect the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in full compliance

with international norms and standards; whereas the High Commissioner has urged the authorities “to radically change their approach to any future protests”;

- D. Whereas the latest crackdown is set against a background of relentless repression against Egyptian civil society, with continuous and widespread cases of politically-motivated prosecution, arbitrary detention and harassment of human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers, and political opposition activists;
- E. Whereas many human rights defenders have been subjected to enforced disappearance before reappearing after having being charged, while others remain disappeared; whereas human rights lawyers including Mahinour al-Massry, Mohamed al-Baqer and Amr Imam have been arrested and arbitrarily detained in pre-trial detention pending investigation for unfounded criminal charges, for having spoken out about the crackdown, documented cases or provided legal representation for persons detained for demonstrating; whereas woman human rights defenders Mahinour al-Massry, Esraa Abdelfattah, Asmaa Daabees with her family members, as well as rights lawyer Amr Imam were first subjected to enforced disappearance before detention; whereas prominent rights defenders and activists Esraa Abdelfattah, Mohamed al-Baqer and Alaa Abdelfattah and have since been subjected to torture and ill-treatment in detention, according to their lawyers and civil society sources; whereas human rights defender Mohamed Zaree faces reprisals for his work on Egypt’s previous UPR, and founder of the League for the Families of the Disappeared Ibrahim Metwally was forcibly disappeared in 2017 by the Egyptian authorities on his way to attend a meeting of the UN Working Group on Enforced Disappearance, then held in pretrial detention without trial for two years; whereas human rights defender Ibrahim Ezz El-Din remains disappeared since June 2019;
- F. Whereas reprisals by the authorities against independent rights organisations and defenders in Egypt for engaging in UN human rights mechanisms and processes have continued; whereas at least 31 rights defenders are banned from travelling, at least 10 human rights defenders and seven rights NGOs have had their assets frozen, and over 37 human rights defenders have been interrogated in the so-called Foreign Funding Case against NGOs;
- G. Whereas peaceful opposition party members have been arrested in large numbers in the most recent crackdown, including 18 members of the Bread and Freedom Party, the founder of the Egyptian Social Democratic Party and the former leader of El-Dostour party;
- H. Whereas peaceful political opposition continues to be targeted, including through medical negligence in detention, enforced disappearance, as well as prosecution, harassment, intimidation, and reprisals, as typified by the 2019 arbitrary arrests targeting members of the Hope Coalition including human rights defenders like Zyad el-Eleimy, academics and journalists who were simply organising a coalition of secular parties through legally sanctioned channels to run in the 2020 legislative elections and other opposition voices added to the case such as Egyptian-Palestinian rights activist Ramy Shaath;
- I. Whereas the United Nations Committee against Torture reported in June 2017 that torture by security forces is “a systematic practice in Egypt”; whereas Egyptian NGOs and activists documenting and denouncing torture, enforced disappearances and

capital punishment have been particularly targeted through repressive measures, such as the closure of the El Nadeem Centre in 2017 and the renewed judicial harassment and intimidation against its director, Dr Aida Seif el Dawla;

- J. Whereas the ECRF reported the enforced disappearance of at least 1,520 people by State Security forces in Egypt between July 2013 and August 2018; whereas according to Amnesty International, victims often face torture and ill-treatment during their enforced disappearance;
- K. Whereas Reporters Without Borders has documented at least 31 media workers currently in detention in Egypt for their work, on the basis of politically-based prosecution and multiple due process violations; whereas 6 of these journalists have been arrested in relation to the recent protests; whereas foreign media workers are also targeted, with several international media correspondents deported or denied entry into Egypt; whereas more than 513 websites, including those of local and international news, media and human rights organizations, are currently blocked by the authorities;
- L. Whereas the NGO Law of 2019 severely restricts the independent work of civil society in Egypt and threatens the very existence of a human rights community in Egypt; whereas the Law gives an extremely narrow definition of authorized civil society, limited to the field of development, strongly constrains the activities of both domestic and international NGOs, using the pretext of national security, and it gives the authorities broad monitoring powers and discretionary powers to regulate and dissolve NGOs;
- M. Whereas women human rights defenders in Egypt continue to face various forms of state-led harassment, notably in the form of defamatory campaigns and judicial prosecution; whereas activists defending the rights of LGBTIQI people and women face continuous repression, including under the guise of the preservation of “public morals”;
- N. whereas labour rights defenders and trade unionists face intimidation, judicial harassment and arbitrary detention, notably in military-owned companies; whereas labour rights defenders are reported to face intimidation from the Egyptian Trade Union Federation;
- O. Whereas under the rule of President el-Sisi, Egyptian courts have recommended at least 2,443 preliminary death sentences--including for at least 12 children--and confirmed at least 1,592 death sentences; whereas at least 1,451 confirmed death sentences occurred in mass trials of 15 or more people simultaneously; whereas during the same period, Egypt has carried out at least 166 executions; whereas the death penalty, particularly in mass trials, has frequently been applied against persons exercising their fundamental rights, including the right to assembly;
- P. Whereas Egypt’s 2015 Counter-terrorism Law uses a broad definition of terrorism that includes ‘infringing the public order, endangering the safety, interests, or security of society, obstructing provisions of the constitution and law, or harming national unity, social peace, or national security’, putting peaceful dissenters, pro-democracy activists

and human rights defenders, at risk of being labelled a terrorist and being sentenced to death;

- Q. Whereas military operations are ongoing in North Sinai since late 2013, and the government has reportedly conducted mass demolitions and forced evictions of tens of thousands of residents and prevented independent reporting, imposing a near-absolute media blackout and restrictions on the movement in and out of Sinai;
- R. Whereas the Egyptian authorities have failed to identify and bring to justice the perpetrators of the murder of Italian researcher Giulio Regeni in February 2016;
- S. Whereas the EU is Egypt's first economic partner and its main source of foreign investment; whereas in line with its revised European Neighbourhood Policy after the so-called Arab Spring, the level and scope of the EU's engagement with Egypt was to be dependent on progress with regard to the country's respect of its commitments on democracy, rule of law and human rights; whereas on 21 August 2013 the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) tasked the High Representative to review EU assistance to Egypt; whereas the Council decided that the EU's cooperation with Egypt would be readjusted according to developments on the ground;
- T. whereas the EU and Egypt adopted Partnership Priorities in June 2017 that aim to enhance cooperation in a wide-range of areas, including in the area of security, counter-terrorism and judiciary reform; whereas EU bilateral assistance to Egypt under the European Neighbourhood Instrument for 2017-20 is around EUR 500 million; whereas as of 2017, the total amount of ongoing EU aid commitments to Egypt channeled through the bilateral envelope already amounted to €1.3 billion;
- U. Whereas the EU FAC conclusions of 21 August 2013 stated that, "Member States also agreed to suspend export licenses to Egypt of any equipment which might be used for internal repression and to reassess export licenses of equipment covered by Common Position 2008/944/CFSP and review their security assistance with Egypt"; whereas these conclusions were reiterated by the FAC in February 2014; whereas the HR/VP confirmed in a written reply dated 27 October 2015 that these conclusions constituted "a political commitment against any military support to Egypt"; whereas at least twelve EU member states flout these conclusions by supplying military or security equipment to Egypt that could be used for internal repression;
1. Denounces the human rights crisis in Egypt, notably the generalized and relentless crackdown on civil society organisations, human rights defenders, lawyers, trade unionists and media workers, as exemplified by the latest wave of repression against peaceful protestors in September;
  2. Calls, once again, on Egyptian authorities to put an end to the repression and to immediately and unconditionally release all persons detained or sentenced solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, including Mahinour al-Massry, Alaa Abdelfattah, Mohamed al-Baqer, Asmaa Daabees, Esraa Abdelfattah, Amr Imam, Mohamed Abdellatif, Zyed el-Eleimy, and Ramy Shaath;

3. Denounces the continued police and military brutality, the harassment, the enforced disappearance, the mass and arbitrary arrests, systematic torture and abuse in places of detention and the sham criminal proceedings against hundreds of individuals, solely as a response to their peaceful exercise of their fundamental freedoms or their expression of dissent; calls on the Egyptian authorities to strictly uphold the unequivocal constitutional guarantees in relation to these freedoms;
4. Calls for the repeal of the libticial NGO law and its replacement by a new legislative framework, drafted in genuine consultation with civil society organizations, that conforms with the Egyptian Constitution and international standards and that nurtures rather than stifles the peaceful expression of civil society;
5. Calls on the Egyptian authorities to close definitely the “foreign funding case”, to drop all related charges and to withdraw all associated pre-trial measures, such as travel bans, asset freezes and tax investigations;
6. Recalls its continued outrage at the savage torture and killing of Italian researcher Giulio Regeni and denounces, once again, the lack of progress in the investigation by the Egyptian authorities; calls for the suspension of all its institutional ties with the Egyptian parliament, pending tangible progress on this case; stresses that it will continue to press the European authorities to engage with their Egyptian counterparts until truth is established on this case and the perpetrators are held accountable;
7. Is dismayed by the demure public response of the EU, notably the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Frederica Mogherini and the EU Delegation in Cairo, to the systematic crack-down on the entire Egyptian human rights community, which falls short of the EU’s commitments, including under the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders; considers that such an approach undermines the credibility of the EU in relation to other human rights situations worldwide, where it has taken a firmer response yet where the violations are substantially lesser than in Egypt; is particularly shocked by the total silence of the High Representative and the absence of official responses by Member States in relation to the latest wave of arrests;
8. Calls on the EEAS and the EU Member States to cease their short-sighted and delusive approach to Egypt’s leadership as a guarantor of stability and a partner to fight violent extremism and terrorism in the region; insists that the post 2020 Partnership priorities effectively take into account the political and human rights situation in the country; expects the EU to prioritise the situation of human rights defenders in Egypt and to report back to Parliament on its engagement thereon with Cairo, including on the individual cases raised in this resolution; urges the EU to step up its public response to developments on the ground;
9. Calls on the EU High Representative to identify a list of individuals with direct responsibility in the current crackdown on human rights defenders and in the lack of progress on the case of Giulio Regeni, and to seek the adoption of EU targeted measures against them;
10. Considers that the human rights situation in Egypt requires the immediate termination of the Commission’s budget support operations, including of the three remaining sector support operations that have yet to be disbursed; calls for a profound and

comprehensive review of its relations with Egypt, including of its assistance programmes which should be restricted to supporting civil society; requires from the Commission a comprehensive overview of financial assistance (grants and loans) provided to Egypt by the Commission, Member States and European Financial Institutions since 2013; calls on the European Court of Auditors to build on its 2013 study of EU support to governance in Egypt and carry out a follow-up study of subsequent EU assistance;

11. Deplores the continued security cooperation and arms deals by EU Member States, notably France, Germany and the United Kingdom, with Egypt, which run counter to the EU Common Position on Arms exports and the Council conclusions of 21 August 2013; denounces the documented use of EU equipment, notably French and Italian, to fuel the repression, including against the protests in September; encourages national parliamentarians in the relevant EU Member States to investigate this matter; calls on the VP/HR to report on the current state of military and security cooperation by Member States with Egypt; calls for an EU-wide ban on export of any form of military and surveillance technology and equipment supplies to Egypt;
12. Insists that the Commission should immediately cease exploratory discussions on the feasibility of an EU-Egypt trade agreement given the current human rights situation in the country;
13. Urges the EU Member States to seize the opportunity of the forthcoming Universal Periodic Review of Egypt's human rights record by the UN Human Rights Council on 13 November and make concrete recommendations that address the human rights crisis in the country; insists on the need to ensure that no one is subjected to reprisals for cooperation with the UN-led process;
14. Stresses the importance to ensure that any arrangement between the EU and Egypt on migration must strictly comply with international human rights standards and respect the fundamental rights of migrants and refugees, and ensure adequate levels of transparency and accountability;
15. Expresses its continued alarm at the practice of the death penalty in Egypt, including death sentences handed out in the context of mass trials and executions following trials which manifestly flouted due process and fair trial guarantees; calls on the Egyptian authorities to introduce an immediate moratorium on the use of the death penalty as a step towards abolition;
16. Calls on Egyptian authorities to cease trying civilians in military courts; expresses its deep solidarity with the Egyptian people suffering from regular terrorist attacks; remains convinced that capital punishment does not constitute an effective means to combat the scourge of terrorism;
17. Calls on the Egyptian authorities to ensure that their ongoing military operations in Sinai are conducted in line with international human rights standards, to thoroughly investigate all abuses and to immediately open North Sinai to independent relief organizations and to independent observers and journalists;
18. 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 parliaments and governments of the Member States, the President and Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the African Commission on Human Rights and Peoples' Rights.