



Plenary sitting

B9-0313/2020

6.10.2020

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 Eritrea, the case of Dawitt Isaak
(2020/2813(RSP))

**Lars Patrick Berg, Dominique Bilde, Anna Bonfrisco, Susanna Ceccardi,
Jaak Madison, Harald Vilimsky**
on behalf of the ID Group

B9-0313/2020

**European Parliament resolution on Eritrea, the case of Dawitt Isaak
(2020/2813(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,
 - having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 1981,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa,
 - having regard to the Cotonou Agreement of 2000, and in particular Article 9 thereof, to which Eritrea is a signatory,
 - having regard to the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea of 11 May 2020 (A/HRC/44/23),
 - having regard to its earlier motions for resolutions on Eritrea,
 - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Dawitt Isaak, a journalist with both Swedish and Eritrean nationality, has been detained without charge in Eritrea since 2001;
- B. whereas in 2002, Eritrea introduced a new law that forbids all churches except Orthodox, Catholic, and Evangelical Lutheran churches; whereas Sunni Islam is also officially recognised in the country; whereas Christians who are not members of state-approved churches are considered agents of the West and a threat to the state;
- C. whereas the US State Department estimates that there are between 1 200 and 3 000 prisoners held because of their faith;
- D. whereas Eritrea has recently freed 27 of Evangelical prisoners due to COVID-19; whereas they have been detained without trial for varying terms between four and 16 years; whereas conditions are attached to the release and the majority have been sent back into indefinite national service;
- E. whereas Eritrea is listed as the sixth country on the Open Doors 2020 World Watch List of the 50 countries in which it is most difficult to live as a Christian; whereas a recent report commissioned by the UK Secretary of State Jeremy Hunt, found that the overwhelming majority (80%) of persecuted religious believers are Christians;
- F. whereas Article 9 of the Cotonou Agreement which requires respect for all human rights

and fundamental freedoms, including respect for fundamental social rights, democracy based on the rule of law and transparent and accountable governance are an integral part of sustainable development;

1. Condemns Eritrea's systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations;
2. Urges the Eritrean Government to put an end to the arbitrary detention of journalists, religious leaders and innocent civilians; urges the Eritrean Government provide detailed information on the fate and whereabouts of all those deprived of physical liberty;
3. Expresses its grave concern about the persecution of Christians in Eritrea; urges the Eritrean legislators to review the country's laws to fully respect and protect freedom of religion; urges, in the meantime, that the Eritrean government releases prisoners who are detained because of practicing their religion;
4. Further expresses its concern that whereas a century ago Christians comprised 20% of the population in the Middle East and North Africa, this has now fallen to less than 4%;
5. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS), the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the Council of the African Union, the East African Community, the Secretary-General of the UN, and the government of the State of Eritrea.