



Plenary sitting

B9-0332/2020

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 Dawit Isaak
(2020/2813(RSP))

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on behalf of the Renew Group

B9-0332/2020

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

The European Parliament,

- having regard having regard to its previous resolutions on Eritrea,
 - having regard to the Statement of 30 June 2020 by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea,
 - having regard to the report of 11 May 2020 of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea,
 - having regard to case 428/12 (2012) filed to the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights on behalf of Dawit and other political prisoners,
 - having regard to the Final Declaration of the 66th session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights of 22 May 2017,
 - having regard to the Cotonou Agreement,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
 - having regard to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights of 1981,
 - having regard to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,
 - having regard to the joint EU-Africa Strategy,
 - having regard to the EU's National Indicative Programme 2014-2020 for Eritrea and the 11th European Development fund 2014-2020,
 - having regard to the Constitution of Eritrea, which guarantees civil liberties, including freedom of religion,
 - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure.
- A. whereas Eritrea has one of the worst human rights records in the world, with routine human rights violations;
- B. whereas the country has held no national elections, and has virtually no independent judiciary, no functioning national assembly and no civil society; whereas the lack of democratic institutions in the country has resulted in a vacuum in good governance and the rule of law that has created an environment of impunity for crimes against humanity;

- C. whereas Eritrea is ranked 182 out of 189 countries in the Human Development Index for 2019, according to the UNDP Human Development Report of 2019;
- D. Whereas Dawit Isaak, a journalist and owner of the newspaper Setit, was arrested on 18 September 2001, during a crackdown on independent media in Eritrea; whereas the government accuses Dawit Isaak of being a “traitor”, though he has never been charged or brought to trial;
- E. Whereat at the same time, ten other independent journalists and eleven reformist politicians were arrested, for reporting or being involved in the G-15 letter that condemned the actions of President Afwerki and his regime;
- F. Whereas since then, Dawit Isaak is being held incommunicado by the Eritrean authorities who refuse to disclose his exact location or details of his health and well-being,
- G. Whereas Dawit Isaak was released from custody on 19 November 2005 after significant interventions on his behalf by the government of Sweden and others; whereas he was re-arrested two days later while on his way to hospital and the Eritrean authorities claimed that he had only been temporarily released in order to undergo medical treatment;
- H. Whereas in December 2008, he was reported to have been transferred to a maximum-security prison in Embatkala, and shortly after, on 11 January 2009, admitted to an Air Force hospital in Asmara, believed to be seriously ill, though the nature and extent of his illness remain unknown and the Government of Eritrea refuses to confirm his hospitalisation;
- I. Whereas Dawit Isaak was granted refugee status in Sweden in 1987 and became a naturalised Swedish citizen in 1992;
- J. Whereas the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights ruled in May 2007 that journalists arrested in September 2001 in Eritrea, including Dawit Isaak, were being held in arbitrary and unlawful detention, and called upon the Eritrean government to release the men and compensate them; whereas the Government of Eritrea has ignored the ruling and all journalists arrested in September 2001 remain in detention;
- K. Whereas 18 September 2020 marked the 19th anniversary of Dawit Isaak’s arrest, and while there is still little information about him, his daughter announced that she was given an update that he is still alive;
 - 1. Calls on Eritrea to immediately and unconditionally release Dawit Isaak, imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression, and is concerned about his life under the notoriously harsh prison conditions in Eritrea and without access to necessary health care;
 - 2. Firmly insists that Dawit Isaak’s continued detention is not an Eritrean affair, since he is also Swedish and consequently EU citizen;
 - 3. Demands furthermore that EU, and EU Member States' representatives, his family and

legal representative be given immediate access to Mr Isaak in order to establish his needs in terms of health care and other support; further demands that Eritrea award him the necessary compensation for his years of imprisonment;

4. Calls on the Eritrean Government to put an end to detention and arbitrary incarcerations of the opposition, journalists, religious leaders and innocent civilians; Calls for immediate and unconditional release of other journalists, opposition members and prisoners of conscience detained since September 2001; calls the authorities of Eritrea to hold fair trials for the accused; demands that the Eritrean Government provide detailed information on the fate and whereabouts of all those deprived of physical liberty;
5. Expresses its strong concern about the systematic human rights violations being perpetrated by the Eritrean government; calls on Eritrea the abolition of torture and other degrading treatment;
6. Calls on Eritrea to lift the ban on independent media and to allow the creation of political parties, as a primary tool of promoting democracy in the country; calls for human rights organisations to be allowed to freely operate within the country;
7. Calls on the EU and its Member States to ensure that human rights are mainstreamed across relations with Eritrea; and to make use of all available measures, especially through the Cotonou Agreement, to ensure that the Eritrean authorities comply with their international commitments;
8. Calls on the Commission to ensure that any form of financing projects in Eritrea strictly responds to the needs of the Eritrean people, for development, democracy, human rights, good governance, security, freedom of speech, press and assembly, and never benefit the Eritrean government; requests a detailed and comprehensive assessment of EU and Member States funds allocated to Eritrea;
9. Appeals to the African Union, as a partner to the EU with an explicit commitment to the universal values of democracy and human rights, to step up its activity in relation to the regrettable situation in Eritrea and to work together with the EU to secure the release of Dawit Isaak and other political prisoners;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the European Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the ACP-EU Council and Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the African Union, and the President and the National Assembly of Eritrea.