



Plenary sitting

B9-0257/2021

27.4.2021

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 the Blasphemy laws in Pakistan, in particular the case of Shagufta Kausar and Shafqat Emmanuel
(2021/2647(RSP))

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on behalf of the Renew Group

European Parliament resolution on the Blasphemy laws in Pakistan, in particular the case of Shagufta Kausar and Shafqat Emmanuel (2021/2647(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Pakistan, in particular those of 16 April 2014 on Pakistan: recent cases of persecution,
 - having regard to Art 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,
 - having regard to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion and Belief of 1981,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regards to The EU Special Incentive Arrangement for Sustainable Development and Good Governance ('GSP+') assessment of Pakistan covering the period 2018 - 2019, SWD(2020) 22¹;
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on 4 April 2014 a Christian couple Shafqat Emmanuel and Shagufta Kausar, was sentenced to death for allegedly sending a text message insulting the Prophet Mohammed; whereas the couple denied any responsibility;
- B. whereas the European Union has repeatedly expressed its commitment to freedom of religion, freedom of conscience and freedom of thought, and has stressed that governments have a duty to guarantee these freedoms all over the world;
- C. whereas freedom of thought, conscience and religion applies to adherents of religions, but also to atheists, agnostics and people without beliefs;
- D. whereas political and religious leaders have a duty at all levels to combat extremism and promote mutual respect among individuals and religious groups;
- E. whereas the repeated and deceptive attacks against the French authorities by members of the Pakistani government and from radical Pakistani groups, including the extremist religious party Tehreek-e-Labaik, have escalated on the ground of blasphemy since the French authorities reactions after the terrorist attack against a French school teacher for defending the freedom of expression; leading the French authorities, on April 15, 2021, to recommend to their nationals to temporarily leave the country;
- F. whereas, despite the very recent ban on the extremist religious party Tehreek-e-Labaik

¹ [SWD\(2020\)22/F1 - EN \(europa.eu\)](#)

Pakistan (TLP), the Pakistani Minister of the Interior announced on April 20, 2021 that a resolution on the expulsion of the French ambassador to Pakistan would be presented to the National Assembly, even though Prime Minister Imran Khan had spoken out the day before against this removal;

- G. whereas since 1 January 2014 Pakistan benefits from generous tariff preferences under the so-called EU Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+), under the condition that Pakistan effectively implements 27 core international conventions, including human rights conventions²;
1. Recalls that Shafqat Emmanuel and Shagufta Kausar launched an appeal seven years ago that has been constantly delayed; deeply regrets that also the last two appeal court hearings, one scheduled on 15 February, and the latest on 24 February 2021 have been postponed once again and indefinitely; calls on the Pakistani authorities to release Shafqat Emmanuel and Shagufta Kausar immediately and unconditionally and to overrule the death sentence;
 2. Calls on the Pakistani authorities to ensure the rule of law and internationally recognised standards of fairness and transparency are applied in any review of these cases;
 3. Regrets the alarming uptick in blasphemy accusations across Pakistan; stresses that Pakistan's blasphemy laws are incompatible with international human rights laws and conventions and therefore calls on the Government of Pakistan to urgently repeal them;
 4. Strongly urges the Pakistan's authorities to allocate all possible resources into investigating and prosecuting cases of religious persecution;
 5. Strongly condemns the use of the death penalty under any circumstances; calls on the Government of Pakistan to turn urgently the de facto moratorium into a real abolition of the death penalty;
 6. Recalls that Pakistan is bound by its own constitution to guarantee freedom of speech and expression, freedom of religion and minority rights;
 7. Strongly condemns the threats made against a Member State of the European Union, including by Pakistani government officials, and calls on the Pakistani authorities to make an unambiguous commitment to respect the Member States of the European Union and their representatives and to ensure the safety of European citizens residing in Pakistan;
 8. Takes note of the latest Commission's GSP+ assessment of Pakistan covering the period 2018-2019, especially on the country's compliance with the GPS+ condition to implement core international conventions; calls on the Commission however to reassess the Pakistan's valid eligibility for the GSP+ programme given the deteriorating situation of human rights, and to swiftly submit a report to the European Parliament

² https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/december/tradoc_152024.pdf

with a convincing explanation for its decision;

9. Urges the European Ombudsman to open an investigation on the correct application of EU rules in the promotion of the GSP+ benefits for Pakistan;
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 EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the UN, the UN Human Rights Council, and the Government and Parliament of Pakistan.