



Plenary sitting

B9-0506/2022

22.11.2022

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 Situation in Afghanistan, especially the deterioration of women's rights and attacks against educational institutions

(2022/2955(RSP))

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on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

B9-0506/2022

European Parliament resolution on Situation in Afghanistan, especially the deterioration of women's rights and attacks against educational institutions

(2022/2955(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Afghanistan, including of 7 April 2022,
 - having regard to its resolution of 19 May 2021 on human rights protection and the EU external migration policy,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on Afghanistan of 15 September 2021, which outlined five benchmarks for EU engagement with the Taliban-led de facto authorities,
 - having regard to the statements of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on Afghanistan,
 - having regard to the UN human rights conventions to which Afghanistan is a party, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child,
 - having regard to the UN Refugee Convention of 1951,
 - having regard to the UN Security Council resolutions on Afghanistan, including Resolution 2593 (2021),
 - having regard to the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan of 9 September 2022 and the report of the UNAMA of 9 September 2022,
 - having regard to the EU thematic guidelines on human rights defenders, on the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, and on violence against women and girls and combating all forms of discrimination against them,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on Council conclusions on women, peace and security of 14 November 2022,
 - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. Whereas Afghan women and girls face growing restrictions to their fundamental rights since the Taliban takeover in August 2021, in particular with regards to access to education and employment, and freedom of movement; whereas girls remain banned from secondary schools; whereas women have been virtually erased from all areas of public life;
- B. whereas human rights violations are reported daily, including arrest, detention, abduction, torture, threats, extortion, killings, and attacks on human rights defenders and their family members; whereas there continues to be a complete lack of accountability for such violations;

- C. whereas the space for independent media and civil society has drastically shrunk under the Taliban, notably with the issuance of strict guidelines on media operations and the detention or killing of journalists and individuals for their peaceful expression of opinion or dissent; whereas peaceful protests, notably in the defence of women's rights, have been met with violence or intimidation;
- D. whereas the caretaker government of the Taliban and the key administrative positions at national and provincial levels continue to be filled by male and predominantly Sunni Pashtun members, and lack representation of Afghanistan's diversity; whereas women are excluded from the Taliban administration;
- E. whereas the socio-economic situation has dramatically deteriorated under the de facto administration and the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic, severe droughts, rising commodity prices, and has been further exacerbated by the international sanctions against the Taliban;
- F. whereas the World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that 18,9 million Afghans are facing acute levels of food insecurity; whereas the humanitarian crisis is disproportionately affecting women and girls; whereas UNICEF has observed an increase in child labour, child marriage and the sale of children, disproportionately affecting girls, as a result of the economic crisis; whereas the WFP has raised alarm about the consequences of the upcoming winter and urges for US\$1.1 billion to be able to continue delivering monthly food and nutritional assistance for the next six months to all acutely food-insecure Afghans;
- G. whereas 5.6 million Afghans are displaced in neighbouring countries; whereas Iran and Pakistan host a large share of Afghan refugees, together accounting for 2.2 million registered Afghan refugees;
- H. Whereas the Hazara community is increasingly targeted under the Taliban and is subjected to multiple forms of discrimination and violence; whereas on 30 September, a suicide attack inside the Kaaj Educational Center in West Kabul killed over 35 girls and young women and injured 82 others from this community;
- I. whereas the Council defined five benchmarks for policies and actions under the Taliban appointed government that would serve as guiding principles for future EU engagement; whereas these benchmarks include the respect for human rights, in particular the full enjoyment of rights of women and girls;
 - 1. Condemns the staggering regression in women and girls' enjoyment of their rights under the Taliban, including widespread gender-based violence, institutionalised discrimination and draconian restrictions of their most basic rights that amount to de facto gender apartheid; denounces the egregious ban on secondary education for girls, in direct violation of their universal right to education;
 - 2. Reiterates its unwavering solidarity and commitment towards the people of Afghanistan facing a devastating and intertwined humanitarian and human rights crisis since the Taliban takeover;
 - 3. Denounces the sharp deterioration of the human rights situation, including the relentless targeting of human rights defenders, journalists and other civil society actors, LGBTIQ+ people, dissidents, judges, as well as the brutal repression of peaceful protest and expressions of dissent across the country;
 - 4. Calls upon the Taliban to uphold the rights of women, including in relation to their active participation in all aspects of civic, economic, political and public life, and to release all detained

women human rights defenders, including Zarifa Yagoobi, Farhat Popalzai and Humaira Yusuf who have been arrested solely for their legitimate human rights work;

5. Calls on the EEAS and the Member States to urge the Taliban to end these retrograde practices and to comply with Afghanistan's obligations under international human rights law; emphasises the importance for all EU actors of hearing and working towards amplifying the voices of Afghan women's rights defenders and women;
6. Urges the EU to step up its support to Afghan groups working to defend rights of women and girls, including alternative education options for girls and to fund specific assistance and protection programmes, including through small-grants, for Afghan women who are victims of or at risk of violence;
7. Calls on the EEAS, EU Delegation and Member States embassies to enhance their support to Afghan human rights defenders and independent journalists, in and outside the country, notably by ensuring accountability for violations through private and public advocacy, ensuring internal protection mechanisms, services and support for those in the country, safe evacuation paths and specific measures to protect those in transit in third countries and coordinating the granting of visas to those seeking to leave the country; coordinating efforts to facilitate human rights defenders and other Afghans who need to flee to exit the country and to reach embassies in the neighbouring countries.
8. Denounces the increasing attacks and marginalization of minority groups, in particular Shia/Hazara but also Hindu and Sikh; denounces the terrorist attacks by the Islamic State of Khorasan Province targeting minorities, including against the Kaaj Educational Centre in West Kabul; deplores the failure of the Taliban to protect these communities from terrorist attacks;
9. Reiterates the importance of documenting and investigating all reports of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, and to hold those responsible to account; in this context, welcomes and supports the work of the UN Mission and the UN Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan; calls on the EU to lead on efforts to establish an independent accountability mechanism on Afghanistan by the UN Human Rights Council which is sufficiently staffed and mandated, and to ensure that victims and CSOs have effective access to this mechanism;
10. Welcomes the resumption of the investigation of the ICC into crimes against humanity and war crimes in Afghanistan; stresses the importance of ending the continued impunity for the crimes committed mainly but not exclusively by US and Afghan forces as well as the Taliban over decades of conflict;
11. Expresses its alarm at the level of food insecurity and rising energy prices in the country and calls on all international actors, in particular the EU and its Member States, to scale up their humanitarian operations in order to help meet immediate basic needs; calls upon the EU to take the lead in bringing together an international coalition raising the required funds for the WFP to be able to fully continue its activities in Afghanistan;
12. Urges the Taliban to ensure free and principled access for humanitarian aid and the safety of humanitarian aid personnel, including for women, and to refrain from interfering in humanitarian programming;
13. Expresses its alarm at the devastating impact of climate change and environmental degradation on Afghanistan which is ranked by the UN as the sixth most affected country in the world by climate-related threats; calls for urgent action by the international community to help Afghans address this dramatic situation;

14. Insists on maintaining a strict conditional engagement with the Taliban in accordance to the five benchmarks set by the Council for engagement with the de facto authorities, including in relation to women's rights; calls on the EU to seek the expansion of the list of targeted measures against the Taliban leadership responsible for the continued deterioration of the human rights situation; presses the EEAS and Member States to reach out to neighbouring countries and other countries to refrain from actively cooperating with and recognizing the Taliban de facto authorities, and to join the global condemnation of and sanctions against them;
15. Strongly emphasises that any forced return to Afghanistan constitutes refoulement, as minimum standards and protection cannot be guaranteed upon return; calls on the Commission to urge Member States to grant access to protection for Afghan nationals, including those whose claims have previously been rejected; calls upon the EU Member States to substantially increase resettlement and the granting of humanitarian visas.
16. Calls on the EU and Member States to use every diplomatic avenue available to press neighbouring countries, notably Pakistan, Iran and Turkey to end all involuntary returns of Afghans and ensure their borders are open to those at-risk seeking refuge and asylum from Afghanistan including those from marginalized communities and to offer them effective access to protection mechanisms;
17. Urges the Member States, Commission and EEAS to prioritize the facilitation of departing Afghanistan of those in need of protection, especially human rights defenders, women, girls, LGBTIQ+ people, religious and ethnic minorities, dissidents, judges, journalists, writers, academics and artists; calls on the EU Member States to guarantee safe passage for people wishing to leave the country; calls on Member States to increase capacity in their embassies in neighbouring countries to process visa and resettlement procedures; calls on neighbouring countries to lift "exit procedures" for Afghan nationals in order to facilitate their timely resettlement; applauds efforts of the German authorities to admit 1,000 Afghans per month and their family numbers through a federal admission programme for people who are at particular risk; encourages the other Member States to follow suit by drawing up equivalent admission programmes;
18. Expresses its concern with regards to the situation of Afghan refugees in Turkey; strongly deplores the lack of access to an asylum procedure and allegations of refoulement towards Afghanistan; calls on the EU Member States to refrain from considering Turkey as a safe third country for Afghan asylum seekers, to assess their asylum claims on the merits and to offer them protection;
19. Welcomes the work of the EU Delegation and its partial return to the country under the "minimal presence" policy; stresses the importance of diplomatic presence in Afghanistan, within the limits of the security and political constraints; calls upon the EU Delegation to prioritise the promotion of human rights and in particular women's rights and rights of vulnerable groups, as well as the negotiation of unhindered access for humanitarian organisations including their female staff members;
20. 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 EU Special Envoy to Afghanistan and the national parliaments of the Member States.