



Plenary sitting

B9-0534/2022

21.11.2022

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the human rights situation in Egypt
(2022/2962(RSP))

**Michael Gahler, Andrey Kovatchev, David McAllister, Tom
Vandenkendelaere, Seán Kelly**
on behalf of the PPE Group

**European Parliament resolution on the human rights situation in Egypt
(2022/2962(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Egypt,
 - having regard to the EU Neighbourhood Policy and to the joint communication of 9 February 2021 entitled ‘Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood – A new Agenda for the Mediterranean’ (JOIN(2021)0002),
 - having regard the 13th Inter-parliamentary meeting EU-Egypt held on 29 September 2022,
 - having regard to the 9th Association Council meeting between Egypt and the European Union of 20 June 2022 and the Partnership Priorities (2021-2027) adopted on 19 June 2022,
 - having regard to the memorandum of understanding between the EU, Egypt and Israel on cooperation related to trade, transport and export of natural gas to the European Union, signed in Cairo on 15 June 2022,
 - having regard to the latest visits to Egypt by European Parliament President Roberta Metsola on 18 February 2022 and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on 15 June 2022,
 - having regard to the statement of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights of 8 June 2021 on efforts to combat violence against women in Egypt,
 - having regard to the statement by UN experts of 7 October 2022 on restrictions on civil society ahead of the 27th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27),
 - having regard to the new EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy for 2020-2024 adopted on 25 March 2020,
 - having regard to the EU Guidelines on the Death Penalty,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Egypt is a key strategic partner of the EU and an important regional player in a region defined by instability and conflict; whereas EU-Egypt relations concern a multitude of important areas, ranging from energy, science and cultural cooperation to combating international terrorism; whereas the EU has supported Egypt in its security, economic and political challenges as a close partner; whereas the Commission has allocated EUR 100 million to Egypt from the ‘Food and Resilience Facility’ mechanism

to mitigate the impact of the Russian aggression against Ukraine; whereas, in addition to numerous funding programmes included in the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – Global Europe programme, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the National Indicative Programme (NIP) and the EU Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) for Africa, Egypt benefited from a total of over EUR 23.5 million in 2014-2020 for the EU thematic programmes and instruments, which include the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) programme, the Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities (CSO-LA) programme under the Development Cooperation Instrument, the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) and Horizon 2020;

- B. whereas the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy for 2020-2024 aims to place the protection and monitoring of human rights at the heart of all EU policies; whereas the Subcommittee on Political Affairs, Human Rights and Democracy, and International Issues, emanating from the Association Agreement between Egypt and the European Union, serves as the main institutional framework for discussing human rights issues between the two parties; whereas the next meeting of this subcommittee is scheduled for 8 December 2022 in Cairo;
- C. whereas, in this same vein, the launch of the first Egyptian National Human Rights Strategy for the period 2021-2026 on 11 September 2021, aimed to advance human rights and fundamental freedoms by focusing on civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights; whereas in July 2022, the National Comprehensive Political Dialogue was launched following a call by President Abdel Fattah El Sisi in April 2022, with a view to widening the political scope and participation in Egypt with the active engagement of all factions, political parties, NGOs and other stakeholders; whereas in April 2022, the Egyptian Presidential Pardon Committee was launched, which is tasked with conducting CSO investigations into cases of prisoners whose situation does not comply with international human rights standards;
- D. whereas progress needs to be made on Egypt's human rights record; whereas reported human rights violations include unlawful or arbitrary killings and extrajudicial killings;
- E. whereas terrorism and deadly violence remain matters of concern in Egypt, particularly in North Sinai; whereas in April, ISIS-Sinai Peninsula (ISIS-SP) released a video that documented the killing of Nabil Habashi, a local Coptic Christian and cofounder of the only church in the district of Bir al-Abd, one of the focal points of ISIS-SP operations; whereas the terrorist attack on 7 May 2022 in Sinai killed several members of the Egyptian military;
- F. whereas according to a report by UNICEF, published in February 2022, nearly one in every 20 girls (4 %) between the ages of 15 and 17 and one in every 10 (11 %) adolescent girls between the ages of 15 and 19 in Egypt either are or have been married; whereas recent reports have noted an alarming increase in the number of Christian girls routinely subjected to systematic kidnapping and rape;
- G. whereas Egypt has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; whereas domestic abuse and violence against women topped the list of crimes in Egypt in 2021; whereas female genital mutilation (FGM) in

Egypt is still endemic, despite the efforts of the National Committee on the Eradication of Female Genital Mutilation;

- H. whereas prison conditions can still be improved; whereas the hunger strike of over 200 days by Egyptian activist Alaa Abdel Fattah, and his refusal to drink water since 6 November 2022, coincided with the start of the COP27 climate conference in Sharm El-Sheikh; whereas the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF) hosted a meeting on 12 November 2022 with independent Egyptian, regional and international human rights organisations; whereas participants welcomed the opportunity and look forward to future constructive engagement with the Egyptian Government; whereas on 15 November in a letter to his family Alaa Abdel Fattah announced the suspension of his hunger strike and on 17 November he received his monthly visit from his mother;
 - I. whereas in Egypt capital punishment is still applied, and after China and Iran, Egypt is the country with the third-highest number of executions;
 - J. whereas media freedom and freedom of expression in Egypt has declined in recent years; whereas journalists and their family members are increasingly persecuted and face detentions, threats and intimidation, and whereas Egypt still has a large number of imprisoned journalists;
 - K. whereas the ninth meeting of the Association Council of the European Union and Egypt held on 20 June 2022 and the Partnership Priorities (2021-2027) adopted on 19 June 2022 reiterated the commitment of both parties to promote democracy, fundamental freedoms and human rights, gender equality and equal opportunities as constitutional rights of all their citizens, in line with the country's international obligations; whereas both sides agreed to deepen their political dialogue on human rights, and agreed that civil society and the private sector are important and powerful contributors to the implementation of their partnership priorities and can support the process of sustainable development under way in Egypt;
 - L. whereas Egypt and the EU reiterated their commitment to address the root causes of terrorism and violent extremism with full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, in order to successfully counter and prevent radicalisation and foster socio-economic development;
1. Underlines the importance of the cooperation between the EU and Egypt on human rights, as a neighbour and partner; is of the opinion that the security and stability of Egypt depends on the country's stepping up its efforts to address its human rights situation, and its establishing appropriate accountability mechanisms for perpetrators, while strengthening democratic institutions and the judicial system; stresses its solidarity with the Egyptian people and its full support to Egypt in the process of strengthening its democratic institutions; recalls that respect for peaceful expression of opinion is particularly important at a time when Egypt is seeking to consolidate democracy and the rule of law;
 2. Reiterates the willingness and commitment of the EU to enhance the work with the Egyptian authorities to address the major challenges the country is facing, including food insecurity as a consequence of the Russian aggression against Ukraine; welcomes

Egypt's vote in favour of UN resolution condemning Russia's annexation of regions of Ukraine, and calls on Egypt to support the EU's efforts to end the human rights violations in Ukraine perpetrated by the Russian regime;

3. Stresses the key role that Egypt has played, and continues to play, in the maintenance of peace and stability in the region, and calls on the authorities to continue their leadership and active role in the reinforcement of human rights mechanisms to protect all citizens, irrespective of individual political or civic affiliations, religious beliefs, membership of an ethnic minority, or any other form of discrimination; welcomes the latest steps taken by the Egyptian authorities in this regard; notes, however, the recent reports of the deteriorating situation of human rights in Egypt; reiterates its call on the Egyptian Government to comply with all national law and international commitments and to fully implement the principles of the international conventions to which the country is a signatory;
4. Stresses the need to end the continuous restrictions on freedom of expression, both online and offline, on freedom of association and assembly and on political pluralism;
5. Welcomes Egypt's recent efforts to address child labour and child marriage; calls, however, on the Egyptian authorities to further strengthen the law on child marriage and to reinforce school systems, and public child protection services preventing and responding to child abuse to further protect children against it;
6. Welcomes the Egyptian Parliament's amendment of the penal code to impose tougher penalties for medical professionals and others who perform FGM; calls on the Egyptian authorities to cooperate with the EU in finding new ways to further protect women against sexual abuse and domestic violence; reiterates its condemnation of FGM and calls for the end of this practice for all women and girls;
7. Stresses the importance of ensuring the equal rights of all Egyptians, regardless of their faith or beliefs; highlights the increase in persecution of Christians in some regions by nationalist, radical and terrorist groups; calls on the Egyptian authorities to strengthen the protection of all religious and ethnic minorities in Egypt, including Copts, by protecting them against violence and discrimination;
8. Welcomes the 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27), celebrated in Sharm El-Sheik from 6 to 18 November, and calls on the Egyptian authorities to use this momentum to diversify, respect and support the civil society spectrum; welcomes the round table hosted by the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF) on 12 November to discuss opportunities to promote and protect human rights in Egypt in the future; notes the positive and encouraging final statement signed by the participants, which shows the potential for a constructive dialogue between organisations and the Egyptian Government; welcomes the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the EU, Egypt and Israel as part of efforts to reduce gas imports from Russia following its aggression against Ukraine;
9. Reiterates its call on the Egyptian Government to live up to its promises and pursue domestic reforms which protect civil rights activists, journalists and their families; welcomes the Egyptian Pardon Committee's work to release more prisoners and reintegrate them into society;

10. Calls on the Commission and the EEAS to strengthen efforts with Egypt on human rights in order to foster mutually beneficial development and growth; calls on the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to continue their human rights dialogue with Egypt and the cooperation to assist progress toward the consolidation of a society that is more democratic, transparent and respectful of human rights;
11. Expresses its condolences to the families of all those who lost their lives in terrorist attacks;
12. 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 governments and parliaments of the Member States, and the Government and Parliament of Egypt.