



Plenary sitting

B9-0535/2022

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))

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on behalf of the ECR 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 outcomes of the 13th EU-Egypt Inter-parliamentary meeting, held on 29 September 2022,
- having regard to the 2021-2027 partnership priorities, which were adopted at the ninth Association Council meeting between Egypt and the EU of 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 EU, signed in Cairo on 15 June 2022,
- having regard to the EU neighbourhood policy,
- having regard to the statement of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights of 8 November 2022 calling on the Egyptian authorities to immediately release Alaa Abdel Fattah,
- having regard to the statement of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights of 8 June 2021 on combating 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 EU Guidelines on the death penalty,
- having regard to the African Charter on Human Rights and Peoples of 1981, ratified by Egypt on 20 March 1984,
- having regard to the Arab Charter on Human Rights, to which Egypt is party,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to 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 or Belief of 1981,
- having regard to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 1984,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989,

- having regard to the Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Egypt is a long-standing strategic partner of the EU, with shared goals of building stability, peace, and prosperity in the Mediterranean and Middle East regions; whereas the EU and Egypt enjoy strong cooperation in a wide range of areas including energy, trade, scientific and cultural cooperation, counter-terrorism, and people-to-people contacts;
- B. whereas high inflation and food prices are drivers of protest in Egypt; whereas the EU and its Member States continuously seek to support the Egyptian Government and Egyptian institutions in implementing domestic, economic, political and social reforms; whereas the EU has supported Egypt in its security, economic and political challenges; whereas the Commission allocated EUR 100 million to Egypt from the Food and Resilience Facility, in order to mitigate the impact of the Russian aggression against Ukraine;
- C. whereas the EU and Egypt reiterated their commitment to promote democracy, fundamental freedoms, human rights and equal opportunities as their citizens' constitutional rights, in line with their international obligations and agreed to deepen their political dialogue on human rights during the ninth Association Council meeting on 20 June 2022 and in the 2021-2027 partnership priorities, adopted on 19 June 2022;
- D. whereas Egypt and the EU also 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;
- E. whereas Egypt hosted COP27 from 6 to 18 November 2022 in Sharm el-Sheikh, which brought together nearly 200 nations to take action towards achieving the world's collective climate goals; whereas COP27 demonstrated the will of the Egyptian authorities to engage in solving global problems;
- F. whereas the human rights situation in Egypt has deteriorated over the past years; whereas reports have increasingly noted restrictions on political freedoms, the media, civil society organisations and the freedoms of expression and assembly; whereas journalists are increasingly being persecuted and face detentions, threats, and intimidation, as do their family members; whereas authorities reportedly target activists with arrests, harsh prison terms, death sentences, forced disappearances and torture;
- G. whereas Egyptian-British human rights activist Alaa Abdel Fattah, who became known for his activism during the 2011 so-called Arab Spring, was arrested in September 2019; whereas he was sentenced in December 2021 by Egypt's Emergency State Security Court to five years in prison for allegedly 'spreading fake news';
- H. whereas since 2 April 2022, Alaa Abdel Fattah has been on hunger strike in protest of his detention, the prison authorities' refusal to grant him British consular access and prison conditions in Egypt; whereas on 6 November, Alaa Abdel Fattah started refusing water, coinciding with the start of the COP27 climate conference in Sharm el-Sheikh;

whereas on 15 November, it was reported that Alaa Abdel Fattah announced the suspension of his strike in a letter to his family; whereas on 17 November, it was reported that his hunger strike had been broken by the Egyptian prison authorities because he had collapsed and had been close to death; whereas that same day, he reportedly received the monthly visit from his mother;

- I. whereas on 11 September 2021, the first Egyptian national human rights strategy for the 2021-2026 period was published with the aim of advancing human rights and fundamental freedoms; whereas in July 2022, the National Comprehensive Political Dialogue was launched upon the call of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in April 2022, with the aim to widen the political scope and participation in Egypt by engaging with political parties, non-governmental organisations and stakeholders from all factions; whereas the Egyptian Presidential Pardon Committee may conduct investigations into prisoners' situations that do not comply with international human rights standards;
- J. whereas the security situation in Egypt remains fragile, with a high risk of terrorist attacks in the Sinai peninsula and major cities across the country by various Islamist organisations active in Egypt, including ISIS-Sinai Peninsula (ISIS-SP), despite the government's aggressive tactics to combat it; whereas the ongoing conflict in Libya has a direct influence on the security of Egypt;
- K. whereas numerous attacks by ISIS-SP have targeted Christians and their places of worship, injuring and killing hundreds; whereas Egypt's Christian community has faced harassment and assault, including violent attacks against persons and damage to their property; whereas in April 2022, ISIS-SP released a video that showed the killing of Nabil Habashi Salama, a local Coptic Christian and co-founder of the only church in the district of Bir al-Abd, in North Sinai and one of the focal points of ISIS-SP operations; whereas recent reports have noted an alarming increase in the number of Christian girls routinely subjected to systematic kidnapping and rape;
- L. whereas Egyptian civil society estimates that 7.8 million girls and women in Egypt have experienced a form of gender-based violence; whereas gender-based murders and violence have reportedly become systemic in Egypt and the country lacks a legal framework to protect women from honour killings, as well as those who actively seek protection from authorities; whereas a series of honour killings has been reported in Egypt, which has caused outrage across the region; whereas one of the cases included that of Naira Ashraf who was stabbed 19 times on 20 June 2022 by Mohamed Adel, whose advances she had rejected, while he tried to behead her; whereas in the wake of Naira Ashraf's murder, Mabrouk Attia, a preacher and professor in Sharia law at Al-Azhar University, demanded that women in Egypt fully cover up or meet the same fate as Naira Ashraf;
- M. whereas recently there has been public discussion in Egypt on abolishing Article 17 in Egypt's Penal Code, which allows a judge to lower a sentence for rape or an honour killing as an act of 'mercy'; whereas Article 60 of the Penal Code, allows a perpetrator of domestic violence to be pardoned if he 'acts in good faith'; whereas according to Article 237, the only form of an 'honour killing' that allows a lesser punishment is when a husband may be charged with a misdemeanour if he kills his wife immediately after catching her committing adultery; whereas women are not granted the same right

under Article 237 and whereas it is also not granted to women's male family members;

- N. 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 in Egypt is still endemic, despite the efforts of the National Committee on the Eradication of Female Genital Mutilation;
- O. whereas the death sentence is still applied in Egypt, and after China and Iran, Egypt is the state with the third highest number of executions; whereas according to Egyptian civil society estimates, at least 176 executions were carried out between August 2020 and August 2021 by the Egyptian authorities;
1. Reaffirms that Egypt is a long-standing strategic partner of the EU, with shared goals of building stability, peace, and prosperity in the Mediterranean and Middle East regions; supports the Egyptian Government in addressing Egypt's economic, political and security challenges through domestic, economic, political and social reforms; supports furthermore the continued strengthening of EU and Member State cooperation with Egypt, including in addressing the root causes of terrorism and violent extremism and to successfully counter and prevent radicalisation;
 2. Welcomes Egypt's support for the UN resolution condemning Russia's annexation of Ukrainian regions, and Egypt's continued support for EU and international efforts to end the human rights violations in Ukraine perpetrated by the Russian regime; stresses its commitment to addressing the major challenges Egypt faces, including food insecurity as a consequence of the Russian aggression against Ukraine; supports closer cooperation between the EU, the Member States and Egypt in energy and welcomes the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the EU, Egypt and Israel to reduce gas imports from Russia following its aggression against Ukraine;
 3. Expresses concern about the recent reports noting a deteriorating human rights situation in Egypt; supports efforts to address the human rights situation in Egypt, including the strengthening of its democratic institutions and judicial system, as well as through the establishment of appropriate accountability mechanisms;
 4. Expresses further concern about human rights defenders facing prolonged periods of detention; calls on the Egyptian Government to live up to its commitments to protect civil rights activists, journalists and their families and calls for imprisoned journalists and those unjustly imprisoned for expressing their freedom of opinion to be freed; urges the Egyptian authorities to ensure that all detained human rights defenders are treated with dignity and afforded every right to due process and a fair, impartial and public trial;
 5. Reminds the Egyptian authorities that respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and providing space to civil society are enshrined in the EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities and are essential parts of EU-Egypt relations and the Egyptian Constitution; calls on the Egyptian authorities to immediately reveal the whereabouts of human rights defenders who have disappeared; condemns the use of the death penalty in Egypt and calls on the Egyptian authorities to end its use;

6. Expresses concern about the condition of Alaa Abdel Fattah; calls on the Egyptian authorities to continue to monitor his situation, provide him with adequate medical help and to unconditionally release him;
7. Condemns in the strongest possible terms gender-based murders and violence and calls on the Egyptian Government and justice system to urgently implement a legal framework to protect women from honour killings; welcomes the Egyptian Parliament's amendment of the penal code to impose tougher penalties for medical professionals and others who perform female genital mutilation; supports EU-Egypt cooperation to protect women and girls against sexual abuse and domestic violence, reiterates its strong condemnation of female genital mutilation and calls for the elimination of the practice;
8. Stresses the importance of guaranteeing the equality of all Egyptians, regardless of their faith or belief; expresses grave concern about the increase in Christian persecutions in Egypt by nationalist, radical and terrorist groups; calls on the Egyptian authorities to do their utmost to ensure the protection of Coptic girls from kidnapping and forced marriages; calls on Egypt to review its blasphemy laws to ensure the protection of religious minorities from this law; welcomes President Sisi's efforts to protect Egypt's Christian minority and his efforts to create a new Islamic discourse to challenge extremism and radicalisation;
9. Strongly condemns the torture and murder of Italian PhD student Giulio Regeni in January 2016; reaffirms its call for every effort to be made to catch the perpetrators of the crime and bring them to justice; calls on the Egyptian authorities to closely cooperate with the Italian authorities concerning the four Egyptian intelligence officers suspected of Giulio Regeni's abduction, and to this end deplores the refusal until now of the Egyptian authorities to do so and calls for the EU and its Member States to take all necessary diplomatic actions;
10. Welcomes the provisional release of Patrick Zaki by the Egyptian authorities in December 2021 and calls for all charges against him to be dropped unconditionally;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, 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 President, Government and Parliament of the Arab Republic of Egypt.