



Plenary sitting

B9-0218/2023

18.4.2023

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 risk of death penalty and execution of singer Yahaya Sharif Aminu for blasphemy in Nigeria
(2023/2650(RSP))

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on behalf of the ECR Group

**European Parliament resolution on the risk of death penalty and execution of singer
Yahaya Sharif Aminu for blasphemy in Nigeria
(2023/2650(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Yahaya Sharif-Aminu, a Nigerian Sufi musician, was arrested in March 2020 and was convicted in August 2020 by the Hausawa Filin Hockey upper-Sharia court of sharing audio messages deemed blasphemous toward the Prophet Mohammed, and sentenced to death under the Kano State Sharia Penal Code;
- B. whereas in January 2021 the verdict was overturned, and a new trial ordered, based on procedural irregularities;
- C. whereas in August 2022, a Court of Appeal upheld the constitutionality of the blasphemy law and affirmed the retrial order; whereas Sharif-Aminu remains in prison without bail while awaiting the retrial, while facing a serious risk of death penalty;
- D. whereas on 9 November 2022 Sharif-Aminu filed a notice of appeal at the Supreme Court of Nigeria challenging the constitutionality of Kano State's blasphemy law; whereas this will be the first time a blasphemy law is challenged at the Supreme Court;
- E. whereas the criminal blasphemy laws that exist in twelve Nigerian states, violate not only international law but also the Nigerian constitution that protects the freedoms of thought, conscience, religion, and expression; whereas there is a strong correlation between blasphemy laws and extremism in Nigeria;
- F. whereas many others have been significantly harmed by Nigeria's blasphemy and religious insult laws; whereas Christian student Deborah Yakubu was stoned and beaten to death in 2022 because of blasphemy allegations; whereas Rhoda Jatau, a Christian woman, faced mob attacks and is on trial without bail for religious insult; whereas humanist Mubarak Bala was sentenced to 24 years in prison on religious insult charges; whereas the persecution of Christians is severe and near to genocidal levels;

1. Calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Yahaya Sharif-Aminu and dropping all charges against him; calls for the release of Rhoda Jatau, Mubarak Bala and all others who face blasphemy allegations;
2. Calls on the Nigerian authorities to ensure Sharif-Aminu has regular access to his family and legal representation and that he is not subjected to inhumane treatment while in custody;
3. Stresses that the ruling represents a setback for human rights, primarily for the right to freedom of religion or belief, and particularly the right to manifest it without fear of intimidation, discrimination, violence or attack;
4. Encourages the government of Nigeria to uphold the supremacy of the constitution by bringing state laws and practices into conformity with it, and with the nation's obligations under international law; considers that Nigeria's blasphemy laws should be deemed unlawful by the country's Supreme Court;
5. Urges the government of Nigeria to combat the impunity surrounding blasphemy accusations by penalising the purveyors of false allegations and bringing perpetrators of violence to justice;
6. Strongly condemns the persecution of Christians in Nigeria and calls for all efforts to be made to ensure their safety, security and freedom of religion;
7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the the President and Government of Nigeria.