



Plenary sitting

B9-0414/2023

3.10.2023

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 Egypt, in particular the sentencing of Hisham Kassem
(2023/2883(RSP))

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on behalf of the Renew Group

Motion for a European Parliament resolution on Egypt, in particular the sentencing of Hisham Kassem (2023/2883(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Egypt,
 - having regard to Rules 144 of its Rules of Procedure;
- A. whereas Hisham Kassem is one of Egypt's important liberal voices, a publisher and an advocate of media freedom and the rule of law; whereas he founded Egypt's newspaper Al Masry Al Youm, introducing a new period of independent and contradictory debates until authorities gained full control of the newspaper;
- B. whereas in June 2023, ahead of the December 2023 Presidential elections, he played a pivotal role in founding the Free Current, a coalition of liberal opposition parties and figures, criticizing the government's economic and political record; whereas government-controlled media launched a smearing campaign against him; whereas he was summoned to a police station for a defamation case and refused to pay the equivalent of 150 euros for his bail; whereas he was then arrested on 20 August on spurious charges, and sentenced to 6 months in prison and a fine by the Cairo Economic Misdemeanours Court on 16 September; whereas he appealed and the court postponed his hearing to October 7, 2023;
- C. whereas Nasserist-left party leader Ahmed El Tantawy has faced harassment and intimidation by authorities since his presidential candidacy announcement in August; whereas at least 73 of his campaign staff and supporters have been arrested since, while Citizen Lab documented that his phone was hacked through Cytrox's Predator spyware;
1. condemns the sentencing of publisher Hisham Kassem to 6 months in prison; underlines his defence rights were not adequately protected, as his lawyers were not given access to his casefile before the trial and authorities denied his right to a public hearing and prevented media and diplomatic representations from attending the trial; urges authorities to immediately and unconditionally release him; calls on the EU Delegation and Member States to visit him in prison;
 2. underlines the importance of holding credible, free and fair elections; urges authorities to stop harassing and intimidating peaceful opposition figures such as presidential candidate, former MP Ahmed El Tantawy; expresses strong concern on the restrictive environment of Egypt's electoral process, preventing any genuine debate on and competition for the country's future;
 3. urges authorities to uphold the rule of law, freedom of expression, press, media and association and an independent judiciary, to stop stifling opposition voices through arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances and torture, to immediately and unconditionally release the tens of thousands of prisoners arbitrarily detained for peacefully expressing their opinion, including Reporters Without Borders and Deutsche Welle award-recipient Alaa

Abdel Fattah and 20 other journalists, and to lift online censorship against independent media;

4. urges EU Member States to raise gross human rights violations in the upcoming EU-Egypt Association Council and to support a monitoring and reporting mechanism for Egypt at the UN Human Rights Council;
5. calls for the effective implementation of the EU's dual-use regulation, notably to protect opposition figures;
6. instructs its President to forward this resolution to the relevant parties and translate it into Arabic.