



16.4.2014

B7-0399/2014 }  
B7-0401/2014 }  
B7-0403/2014 }  
B7-0405/2014 }  
B7-0410/2014 } RC1

## JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rules 122(5) and 110(4) of the Rules of Procedure

replacing the motions by the following groups:

ECR (B7-0399/2014)  
S&D (B7-0401/2014)  
PPE (B7-0403/2014)  
ALDE (B7-0405/2014)  
Verts/ALE (B7-0410/2014)

on Pakistan: recent cases of persecution  
(2014/2694(RSP))

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on behalf of the PPE Group

**Véronique De Keyser, Ana Gomes, Joanna Senyszyn, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg, Mitro Repo, Richard Howitt, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Antigoni Papadopoulou**  
on behalf of the S&D Group

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**Marietje Schaake, Alexander Graf Lambsdorff, Sarah Ludford,  
Louis Michel, Jelko Kacin, Kristiina Ojuland, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica,  
Robert Rochefort, Hannu Takkula, Ramon Tremosa i Balcells,  
Johannes Cornelis van Baalen, Marielle de Sarnez**

on behalf of the ALDE Group

**Jean Lambert, Nicole Kiil-Nielsen, Raúl Romeva i Rueda**

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

**Peter van Dalen, Ryszard Antoni Legutko, Tomasz Piotr Poręba,**

**Adam Bielan, Ryszard Czarnecki, Konrad Szymański, Marek Józef**

**Gróbarczyk**

on behalf of the ECR Group

## European Parliament resolution on Pakistan: recent cases of persecution (2014/2694(RSP))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on human rights and democracy in Pakistan, in particular those of 12 March 2014 on Pakistan’s regional role and political relations with the EU<sup>1</sup>, of 10 October 2013 on recent cases of violence and persecution against Christians, notably in Peshawar<sup>2</sup>, of 10 March 2011 on Pakistan, in particular the murder of Shahbaz Bhatti<sup>3</sup>, of 20 January 2011 on the situation of Christians in the context of freedom of religion<sup>4</sup> and of 20 May 2010 on religious freedom in Pakistan<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,
- having regard to the statements by EU Vice-President / High Representative Catherine Ashton regarding the attack on the Christian community in Peshawar of 23 September 2013 and regarding the assassination of Shahbaz Bhatti of 2 March 2011,
- having regard to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion and Belief of 1981,
- having regard to the reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief,
- having regard to the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers (Addendum: Mission to Pakistan), of 4 April 2013,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 December 2013 on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2012 and the European Union’s policy on the matter, which condemns the persecution of Christians and other religious minorities<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to the EU-Pakistan five-year engagement plan of March 2012, which contains priorities such as good governance and dialogue on human rights, as well as the closely related 2nd EU-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue of 25 March 2014,
- having regard to the Council conclusions on Pakistan of 11 March 2013 that reiterate the EU’s expectations regarding the promotion of and respect for human rights and condemn all

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2014)0208.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2013)0422.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 199 E, 7.7.2012, p. 179.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 136 E, 11.5.2012, p. 53.

<sup>5</sup> OJ C 161 E, 31.5.2011, p. 147.

<sup>6</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2013)0575.

acts of violence, including against religious minorities<sup>1</sup>,

- having regard to Rules 122(5) and 110(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas a Christian couple, Shafqat Emmanuel and Shagufta Kausar, was sentenced to death on 4 April 2014 for allegedly sending a text message insulting the Prophet Mohammed; whereas the couple denied responsibility and declared that the phone from which the text originated was lost a while before the message was sent;
- B. whereas Sawan Masih, a Pakistani Christian from Lahore, was sentenced to death on 27 March 2014 for blasphemy against the Prophet Mohammed; whereas the announcement of allegations against Masih sparked fierce rioting in Joseph Colony, a Christian neighbourhood in the city of Lahore, in which many buildings, including two churches, were burnt down;
- C. whereas Asia Bibi, a Christian woman from Punjab, was arrested in June 2009 and received a death sentence in November 2010 on charges of blasphemy; whereas her appeal has finally reached the high court in Lahore after several years; whereas for the two first hearings in January and March 2014 the presiding judges appeared to be on leave;
- D. whereas in 2012, the 14-year-old Christian girl Rimsha Masih, who was wrongfully accused of desecrating the Quran, was acquitted after being found to have been framed and the person responsible was arrested; whereas, however, she and her family had to leave the country;
- E. whereas Christians, who represent about 1.6 % of the population in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, suffer from prejudice and sporadic bouts of mob violence; whereas the majority of Pakistani Christians lead a precarious existence, often fearful of allegations of blasphemy, a subject which can provoke outbursts of public violence; whereas several other Christians are currently in prison on blasphemy charges;
- F. whereas Mohammad Asghar, a UK citizen with a mental illness living in Pakistan, was arrested after allegedly sending letters to various officials claiming he was a prophet, and was sentenced to death in January 2014;
- G. whereas another UK citizen, 72-year-old Masood Ahmad, a member of the Ahmaddiya religious community, was only recently released on bail after having been arrested in 2012 on charges of citing from the Quran, which is considered as blasphemy in the case of Ahmaddis who are not recognised as Muslims and are forbidden to ‘behave as Muslims’ under Section 298-C of the criminal code;
- H. whereas five Hindu temples have been attacked in different parts of Sindh (in Tharparkar, Hyderabad and Larkana) over the past months and three Hindu boys have been accused of blasphemy and are currently under arrest in Badin (Sindh), as they had spray-painted some signs on the occasion of Holi (the Hindu festival of colour);

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/135946.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/135946.pdf)  
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- I. whereas members of the Shia Hazara community in particular are now victims of killings and forced migration on a daily basis due to the upsurge in sectarian violence in Pakistan; whereas more than 10 000 Hindus have also reportedly fled the province as abductions-for-ransom have become routine over the last three years;
- J. whereas Pakistan's blasphemy laws make it dangerous for religious minorities to express themselves freely or engage openly in religious activities; whereas there has been global concern for a number of years about the application of these laws because accusations are often motivated by score-settling, economic gain or religious intolerance, and they foster a culture of vigilantism, giving mobs a platform for harassment and attacks; whereas Pakistan has been requested by UN Human Rights mechanisms to repeal the blasphemy laws, or at the very least, to put safeguards in place immediately, to prevent abuse of the law to victimise citizens, who often come from minority communities;
- K. whereas hundreds of honour killings were reported in 2013 alone; whereas these represent only the most visible form of aggression against women, given the consistently high rate of domestic violence and forced marriage;
- L. whereas Pakistan plays an important role in fostering stability in southern Asia and should therefore lead by example in strengthening the rule of law and human rights;
- M. whereas the European Union recently granted GSP+ status to Pakistan, subject to the implementation of applicable human rights conventions;
  - 1. Expresses its deep concern at the sharp increase in sectarian violence and religious intolerance towards minorities and attacks on places of worship, including Christian churches, and the continuing repression of women in Pakistan;
  - 2. Is worried about the effects that such violence has on the future development of Pakistani society as a whole in view of the socioeconomic challenges facing the country; stresses that it is in Pakistan's long-term interest for all its citizens to experience greater security;
  - 3. Expresses its deep concern that the controversial blasphemy laws are open to misuse which can affect people of all faiths in Pakistan; expresses its particular concern that use of the blasphemy laws, which were publicly opposed by the late Minister Shahbaz Bhatti and by the late Governor Salman Taseer, is currently on the rise and targets Christians and other religious minorities in Pakistan;
  - 4. Reminds the Pakistani authorities of their obligation under international law to respect freedom of expression and the freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief; calls on the Pakistani authorities to release prisoners who are convicted on the grounds of blasphemy, and to overrule the death sentences on appeal; calls on the Pakistani authorities to guarantee the independence of the courts, the rule of law and due process in line with international standards on judicial proceedings; calls furthermore on the Pakistani authorities to provide sufficient protection to all those involved in blasphemy cases, including by shielding judges from outside pressure, by protecting the accused and their families and communities from mob violence, and by providing solutions for those who are acquitted but cannot go back to their places of origin;

5. Strongly condemns the application of the death penalty under any circumstances; calls on the Government of Pakistan as a matter of urgency to turn the de facto moratorium on the death penalty into the effective abolition of the death penalty;
6. Calls on the Government of Pakistan to carry out a thorough review of the blasphemy laws and their current application – as contained in Sections 295 and 298 of the Penal Code – for alleged acts of blasphemy, especially in light of the recent death sentences; encourages the government to withstand pressure from religious groups and some opposition political forces to maintain these laws;
7. Appeals to the government to speed up the madrassa reforms by establishing a basic curriculum that meets international standards, with special emphasis on removing hate material from the curricula and introducing community and religious tolerance teaching into the basic syllabus; calls on the Commission to follow up on previous demands for the revision of EU-financed textbooks containing hate speech;
8. Urgently appeals to the Government and Parliament of Pakistan to introduce reforms to the formal justice system in order to discourage recourse to informal structures such as jirgas and panchayats, and to substantially increase the financial and human resources of the judiciary, in particular at the level of courts of first instance;
9. Strongly condemns all acts of violence against religious communities as well as all kinds of discrimination and intolerance on the grounds of religion and belief; calls on the Government of Pakistan to intervene to protect victims of religiously motivated mob violence, and notably to ban public hate speech, and encourages all Pakistanis to work together to promote and ensure tolerance and mutual understanding; urges the Pakistani authorities to prosecute those responsible for incitement and false accusations of blasphemy;
10. Recalls that freedom of religion and minority rights are guaranteed by Pakistan's constitution; welcomes the measures taken in the interest of religious minorities by the Government of Pakistan since November 2008, such as establishing a five per cent quota for minorities in the federal job sector, recognising non-Muslim public holidays and declaring a National Minorities Day;
11. Urges the Pakistani government, however, to increase efforts aimed at better inter-religious understanding, to actively address religious hostility by societal actors, to combat religious intolerance, acts of violence and intimidation, and to act against the perception of impunity;
12. Is deeply concerned about the plight of minority women and girls who often suffer twice over, notably through the practice of forced conversion and targeted sexual violence; urges the Pakistani authorities to improve protection, prosecution and reparations;
13. Stresses that the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is a fundamental human right; expresses its concern at the recent tendency in Pakistan to curb the freedom of thought, expression and information by blocking and controlling much frequented internet services; calls on the Government to stop censorship of the internet and to revise both the draft anti-terrorism and draft NGO legislation, which would massively curtail the independence and

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freedom of operation of NGOs and could lead to the breakdown of work by internationally connected NGOs in Pakistan;

14. Stresses the important role Pakistan plays in fostering stability in the whole region; encourages Pakistan to play a constructive role in promoting a secure Afghanistan and therefore urges the Pakistani Government to strengthen respect for fundamental human rights in its own country as well as in the whole region;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the European Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the UN, the UN Human Rights Council, and the Government and Parliament of Pakistan.