

Nigeria: case of Amina Lawal

European Parliament resolution on the case of the Nigerian woman, Amina Lawal, sentenced to death by stoning in Nigeria

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 5 September 2002¹ opposing the death sentence by stoning passed on Ms Amina Lawal by the Sharia Court of Bakori in Katsina State on 22 March 2002, for having a child out of wedlock,
- A. aware that the death sentence has been appealed and is due for hearing on 25 March 2003,
- B. repeating the point made in its earlier resolution that Nigeria remains one of the few countries in which a person can be sentenced to death for consensual sexual activity,
- C. whereas to execute Ms Amina Lawal for the alleged offence is in breach of human rights as defined inter alia in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights,
- D. whereas Amina Lawal has the right to appeal against this verdict to a non-religious court,
- E. whereas the new Federal Justice Minister, Kanu Agabi, has announced the Government's wish to appeal the Sharia court verdict and has recalled that Muslims must enjoy the same rights and protection as other Nigerians, in conformity with the Constitution,
- 1. Expresses its categorical opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances because it represents the ultimate violation of the right to life guaranteed by international law, and urges the Nigerian Government to take all steps to ensure that all executions are halted and that the use of the death penalty is ended;
- 2. Calls on the Upper Sharia Court of Appeal of Katsina to uphold its commitment to all the international agreements entered into by Nigeria in the human rights field, and therefore asks that all elements of Sharia law that contradict international law be repealed;
- 3. Calls on the Nigerian Supreme Court to deliver a judgment bringing regional legislation into line with the international law that Nigeria has signed up to;
- 4. Calls on the Nigerian Government to ensure that the courts operate in accordance with international human rights law and the bill of rights in Nigeria's own constitution;
- 5. Confirms that respect for human rights forms the subject-matter of one of the fundamental clauses contained in all agreements between the EU and third countries;

¹ P5_TA(2002)0411.

6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the African Union, the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the UN Secretary-General and the Government and Parliament of Nigeria.