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Forced abortion scandal in China

European Parliament resolution of 5 July 2012 on the forced abortion scandal in China (2012/2712(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the reports submitted under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Optional Protocol thereto, and to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,
 - having regard to the Convention on the Rights of the Child,
 - having regard to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994,
 - having regard to China's one-child policy and to China's laws on abortion,
 - having regard to Rules 122(5) and 110(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on 2 June 2012 a seven-months-pregnant woman, Feng Jianmei, was abducted and underwent a forced abortion in Zhenping county (Shanxi province), sparking a wave of indignation and condemnation in China and around the world;
- B. whereas abortions beyond six months are illegal under Chinese law; whereas the Ankang municipal government conducted an investigation which concluded that officials in Zhenping county had used 'crude means' and 'persuaded' Ms Feng to abort the foetus; whereas the report stated that this decision had violated her rights; whereas the Ankang municipal government has announced punishments for local planning officials involved in the case, including sacking;
- C. whereas, according to the investigation, local officials had asked Ms Feng's family for a 'guarantee deposit' of RMB 40 000, which according to her husband was a fine for having a second child; whereas local authorities had no legal grounds for collecting such a deposit; whereas Ms Feng was forced to sign a consent form to terminate her pregnancy because she would not pay the fine, and was kept in the hospital by guards;
- D. whereas, as a result of China's one-child policy, illegal sex-selective abortions are widespread, creating an imbalance between the numbers of men and women;
- E. whereas the EU has provided, and still provides, funds for organisations involved in family planning policies in China;
1. Strongly emphasises that, according to the International Conference on Population and Development Plan of Action, the aim of family planning programmes must be to enable couples and individuals to make free, responsible and informed decisions about childbearing and to make available a full range of safe, effective and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice, and any form of coercion has no part to play;

2. Reiterates the fundamental right of all women to access to public health care systems, in particular to primary, gynaecological and obstetric health care as defined by the World Health Organisation;
3. Extends its condolences to the family of the victims, strongly condemns the harassment to which they are being subjected and demands public protection for them;
4. Strongly condemns the decision to force Ms Feng to have an abortion and condemns the practice of forced abortions and sterilisations globally, especially in the context of the one-child policy;
5. Welcomes the Ankang municipal government's decision to offer Ms Feng's family compensation and strongly to sanction local officials involved in the case;
6. Takes note of the fact that Ms Feng's case became widely known thanks to the internet and stresses the importance of freedom of expression, including online; welcomes with satisfaction the emergence of a public sphere for debate, thanks partly to microblogging;
7. Considers important the ongoing debate among intellectuals and academics as to whether or not to continue with the one-child policy in China;
8. Urges the Commission to ensure that its funding of projects does not breach the remarks set out in Section III, Title 21 of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012;
9. Calls on the Commission and the European External Action Service to include forced abortion on the agenda for their next bilateral human rights dialogue with China;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to 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, the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations and the Government and Parliament of the People's Republic of China.