Resolution on Pakistan

2007/2603(RSP) - 12/07/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 11 July 2007, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on Pakistan.

The Parliament expresses its solidarity with the people of Pakistan who are victims of the violence perpetrated by armed extremists. It is deeply concerned about reports that some people were possibly held as hostages in the Red Mosque and it recognises the challenges the siege posed to the Government of Pakistan. Grave concern is expressed about the still unknown number of victims and supports efforts to bring those responsible to justice.

The Parliament urges the Government of Pakistan to return to democratic government by holding free, fair and democratic elections by the end of the year and warns against the imposition of emergency rule or other measures to suppress freedom of speech, association, assembly or movement. It encourages President Musharraf to respect the existing Constitution by allowing the new assemblies to hold presidential elections and by relinquishing his post of army chief, which he had previously agreed to do in an undertaking to the EU.

The Parliament is concerned about a number of aspects in the run-up to these elections, such as the neutrality of the caretaker government, which will be formed three months before the elections and will be appointed by President Musharraf and the fact that an academic qualification is requested as a precondition for candidature, which will exclude 70% of Pakistani women from standing for election. It urges the removal of this restriction.

The Council and the Commission are called upon to take a firm stand on upholding all the principles enshrined in the Cooperation Agreement, in particular the democracy and human rights clause.

Parliament condemns all attempts by the Government of Pakistan to control media freedom by introducing amendments to broadcasting licences, restricting the live broadcasting of outside events and issuing government directives to media and broadcasting associations. It condemns all forms of threat, coercion and intimidation of journalists and broadcasters.

It is also concerned that while President Musharraf has pledged his commitment to tackling terrorism and extremism at an international level, the domestic political alliances that exist between the government, the military and religious fundamentalists may hamper the ability of the government to address the issue of extremism and fundamentalism. It urges the Pakistani Government to take immediate and effective steps to prevent any political or armed force from using its territory as a sanctuary and as a base for operations in Afghanistan.