Resolution on Eritrean refugees held hostage in Sinai

2010/3010(RSP) - 16/12/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which was held in plenary on the same day, the European Parliament adopted by 36 votes to 14, with 10 abstentions, a resolution on Eritrean refugees held hostage in Sinai.

The text adopted was proposed by the EPP group.

Members recall that Egyptian security authorities are searching for hundreds of Eritrean refugees who the UNHCR says are being held hostage by Bedouin smugglers in Sinai after the refugees failed to pay the fees demanded by the smugglers to help them sneak into Israel. The UNHCR said it was concerned about 250 Eritrean migrants believed to be held hostage in the Sinai desert.

In this context, Members urge the Egyptian authorities to take all necessary measures to secure the release of Eritreans held hostage and to avoid the use of lethal force against illegal migrants crossing the borders of the country to and allow UNHCR access to all asylum seekers and refugees in state custody.

Appreciating the ongoing efforts exerted by the Egyptian authorities in verifying the information mentioned in the reports issued by the UNHCR regarding the 250 Eritreans being held hostage in Sinai, Members underline that the Sinai desert border has become a trafficking route for African migrants seeking jobs.

Parliament welcomes Egypt's efforts in combating Human Trafficking specially the establishment of ‘the National Coordinating Committee for combating and preventing trafficking in persons’ in the year 2007, and calls on all countries to resume their efforts in facing the challenge of Human trafficking crimes world wide, and to respect relevant national laws. Moreover, appreciating Egypt's continuous commitment in fulfilling its obligations under international treaties, in particular under the 1951 Refugees Convention, Parliament acknowledges that any refugee seeker who participates in acts threatening, directly or indirectly, the safety and independence of the host country, should be considered a threat to its national security according to UNHCR terms.