Resolution on the use of sexual violence in conflicts in North Africa and the Middle East

2011/2661(RSP) - 07/04/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution condemning the use of sexual violence in conflicts in North Africa and the Middle East.

The resolution was tabled by the S&D, ALDE, Greens/ALE, EPP, and GUE/NGL groups.

It notes that women have actively participated in the uprisings for more democracy and freedoms in North Africa and the Middle East, but that the incumbent regimes in Libya and Egypt have resorted to sexual assaults as part of the conflict surrounding these revolutions, targeting women. Members call on the Commission and Member State strongly to **oppose the use of sexual assaults** on, and intimidation and targeting of, women in Libya and Egypt. Parliament also strongly **condemns forced 'virginity tests' inflicted by the Egyptian army** on women protesters arrested in Tahrir Square and considers this practice as unacceptable, as it amounts to a form of torture. It calls on Egypt's Supreme Military Council to take immediate measures to stop this degrading treatment and to ensure that all security and army forces are clearly instructed that torture and other ill-treatment, including forced 'virginity tests', cannot be tolerated and will be fully investigated. Members recommend that an **independent inquiry** be established in order to hold the perpetrators accountable, with particular reference to crimes within the meaning of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court committed by Muammar Gaddafi.

Members strongly believe that the changes taking place in North Africa and the Middle East must contribute towards the **ending of discrimination against women** and their full participation in society on equal terms with men and in compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). They call on Member States actively to promote in the long term, both politically and financially, full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the establishment at European level of the control institutions and mechanisms provided for therein, and on the United Nations to ensure implementation of the resolution at all international levels.

With regard to actions within the **European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP),** Parliament stresses the need to prioritise human rights in ENP measures as an integral part of the democratisation process, and underlines the need to share EU experience on equality policy and on the fight against gender violence. It emphasises the need to support specific actions with a view to achieving systematic in the ENP countries;, stressing that equality must become an integral part of the democratisation process and that, moreover, education for women and girls should be a priority and should include raising awareness of their rights. Members call on the VP/HR, the EEAS and the Commission to place at the top of the agenda for their talks with ENP southern countries the EU's political priorities of death penalty abolition, respect for human rights – including women's human rights – and fundamental freedoms, and the ratification of a number of international legal instruments including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.