Resolution on Eritrea: the case of Dawit Isaak

2011/2807(RSP) - 15/09/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 53 votes to 0 a resolution on Eritrea: the case of Dawit Isaak.

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

It deplores the fact that Dawit Isaak, a Swedish citizen and a former reporter for an independent newspaper in Eritrea has not yet regained his freedom and has had to spend 10 years as a prisoner of conscience. Members express fears for the life of Mr Isaak under the notoriously harsh prison conditions in Eritrea and without access to necessary health care, and they **call on the Eritrean authorities to release Dawit Isaak and former high-ranking officials** immediately, in compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They call on the Eritrean authorities to lift the ban on the country's independent press and immediately to release the independent journalists and immediately to release all political prisoners including Dawit Isaak. If they cannot be released at once, the State of Eritrea must extend medical and legal assistance to these and other prisoners. Parliament demands furthermore that EU and EU Member States' representatives be given access to Mr Isaak in order to establish his needs in terms of health care and other support.

It calls on the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to step up efforts by the EU and its Member States to secure Dawit Isaak's release. The Council is asked to make more active use of the dialogue mechanisms associated with the EU development assistance programme for Eritrea, in order urgently to find solutions that will lead to the liberation of political prisoners and to improved democratic governance in the country. Members call on the Council, in this context, to ensure that EU development assistance does not benefit the Government of Eritrea but is targeted strictly at the needs of the Eritrean people.

Parliament reiterates its demand for an intra-Eritrean national conference to be held, bringing together the various political party leaders and representatives of civil society with a view to finding a solution to the current crisis and setting the country on the path to democracy, political pluralism and sustainable development.

It appeals to the African Union, as a partner to the EU with an explicit commitment to the universal values of democracy and human rights, to step up its activity in relation to the regrettable situation in Eritrea and to work together with the EU to secure the release of Dawit Isaak and other political prisoners, and it follows with interest the judicial process of a habeas corpus appeal in the case of Mr Isaak, lodged in the Eritrean Supreme Court in July 2011 by European lawyers.