Resolution on the human rights situation in the United Arab Emirates

2012/2842(RSP) - 26/10/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the human rights situation in the United Arab Emirates.

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

It expresses great concern about assaults, repression and intimidation against human rights defenders, political activists and civil society actors within the United Arab Emirates and call on the UAE authorities to halt the ongoing crackdowns immediately and unconditionally release all prisoners of conscience and activists, noting that the number of political detainees is now 64. Parliament considers that the **evidence indicates that national security is the pretext for a crackdown** on peaceful activism designed to stifle calls for constitutional reform and reform on human rights issues such as statelessness, whereas the UEA insists the crackdown is a response to a foreign-inspired Islamist plot that aims to overthrow the government. Members note that the detainees all have ties to al-Islah, a peaceful Islamist group that has operated in the United Arab Emirates since 1974. Members **condemn the application of the death penalty under any circumstance**, noting that such sentences continue to be imposed in the United Arab Emirates.

They welcomes the adoption of the new EU human rights package and urge the European institutions, including the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, to **take concrete actions,** together with the 27 Member States, and ensure a clear and principled EU policy vis-à-vis the United Arab Emirates that addresses the ongoing serious human rights violations, **through démarches, public statements and initiatives at the Human Rights Council**. The Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union and the European institutions must **place human rights at the centre of its relations with all third countries**, including strategic partners, with special emphasis on the next EU-GCC Ministerial Meeting. Members note that according to the report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, trafficking in persons for labour exploitation continues to be widespread in the United Arab Emirates and victims of such trafficking remain unidentified.

Parliament welcomes the accession of the United Arab Emirates on 19 July 2012 to the United Nations Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and urges the UAE authorities to affirm its commitment to its assumed treaty obligations by conducting thorough, impartial and independent investigations into the allegations of torture as well forced disappearances.

It calls on the UAE to:

- ensure that detainees deemed to have broken the law be brought before a judge, be charged with a crime and be provided with the legal assistance of their choosing;

- conduct thorough and impartial investigations into the assault and public threats made against Ahmed Mansoor, a prominent human rights defender and blogger, who was attacked and jailed in 2011 for signing a petition calling for greater political participation through an elected parliament. Parliament also wants investigations into all the other cases of harassment and assault;

- affirm the UAE's intent to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights in line with its bid for membership of the UN Human Rights Council for 2013 to 2015 by ratifying the ICCPR and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

(ICESCR) and their optional protocols and by issuing a standing invitation to visit to all UN special procedure mandate holders.

Parliament believes that it is crucial to continue the efforts to increase the cooperation between the EU and the Gulf region and that **regular inter-parliamentary meetings** between Parliament and its partners in the region are an important forum to develop a constructive and frank dialogue on issues of common concern.