Resolution on the situation in Egypt

2014/3017(RSP) - 15/01/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in Egypt.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE, Greens/EFA groups and Fabio Massimo CASTALDO and Ignazio CORRAO (EFDD, IT).

Parliament recalled that since the military takeover of June 2013, the Egyptian Government has conducted a large-scale campaign of arbitrary detention, harassment, intimidation and censorship against government critics solely for exercising their rights to free assembly, association and expression, including journalists, students and human rights defenders, and against political opponents.

It stressed that thousands of protesters and prisoners of conscience have been detained in Egypt since the Egyptian army seized power and that on 10 January 2015 an Egyptian court in the Nile Delta province of Baheira sentenced Karim al-Banna, a 21-year-old student, to three years in jail for announcing on Facebook that he is an atheist and for insulting Islam.

Given that the Egyptian authorities have tightened the noose on freedom of expression and the freedom of the media, Parliament reminded the Egyptian Government that the long-term success of Egypt and its people depends on the protection of universal human rights and on the establishment and anchoring of democratic and transparent institutions.

Parliament also called for the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience and urged the Egyptian authorities to take concrete steps to ensure that the provisions of the new Constitution on fundamental rights and freedoms, including freedom of expression and assembly, are fully implemented.

The Egyptian authorities are called upon to:

- conduct prompt, impartial and independent investigations into allegations of excessive use of force, ill-treatment and other human rights violations, including sexual abuse;
- reverse the death sentences handed down without consideration for due process which respects the rights of the defendants;
- engage in a genuine dialogue with civil society organisations and legal experts in order to enact legislation on associations and assembly;
- ensure the immediate and unconditional release of all kidnapped Egyptian citizens currently held in Libya, including the 20 Egyptian Copts abducted on 3 January 2015.

Terrorism in the Sinau Penisula: Parliament highlighted the security situation in Sinai which is critical, with **hundreds of soldiers being killed by jihadist groups operating in the area**. It noted that acts of terror are taking place in this region almost on a daily basis and that the state ordered the eviction of thousands of residents of Rafah and established a 500-metre buffer zone along the Gaza border. In this regard, Parliament stressed that the fact that the EU and the international community must stand firm and cooperate with Egypt in its fight against terrorism. It called on the Egyptian authorities to do their utmost to stop criminal networks that are still operating on the human trafficking/smuggling routes within and towards Sinai.

Women and LGBT: Parliament urged the Egyptian Government to fully implement national strategies for combating violence against women and eliminating all forms of discrimination. It urged the Egyptian

authorities to cease criminalising LGBT people, on the basis of the ‘debauchery law’, for expressing their sexual orientation.

Cooperation: Parliament invited the Member States to define a common strategy among Member States towards Egypt. It urged the Council, the VP/HR and the Commission to work actively in accordance with the principle of conditionality (‘more for more’) and to take into consideration the serious economic challenges faced by Egypt in its bilateral relations with, and its financial support for, the country.

In this context, Parliament requested in particular, clarification of the status of:

- the planned justice reform programme;
- the EU budget support programmes;
- the trade and domestic enhancement programme;
- Egypt’s participation in EU regional programmes such as Euromed Police and Euromed Justice.

Lastly, Parliament called for an EU-wide ban on the export to Egypt of intrusion and surveillance technologies which could be used to spy on and repress citizens.