Resolution on the case of Raif Badawi, Saudi Arabia

2015/2550(RSP) - 12/02/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the case of Mr Raif Badawi, Saudi Arabia.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE, GUE/NGL, Greens/EFA and EFDD groups.

Parliament recalled that Raif Badawi, a blogger and human rights activist, was charged with apostasy and sentenced by the Criminal Court of Jeddah in May 2014 to 10 years in prison, 1 000 lashes and a fine of SAR 1 million (EUR 228 000) after creating the website 'Free Saudi Liberals Network' for social, political and religious debate which was deemed to be an insult to Islam.

It also recalled that on 9 January 2015, Mr Badawi received his first set of 50 lashes in front of the al-Jafali mosque in Jeddah, resulting in wounds so profound that when he was taken to a prison clinic for a medical check-up, it was found by the doctors that he would not be able to withstand another round of lashes.

Parliament strongly condemned the flogging of Raif Badawi and recalled that judicial verdicts imposing corporal punishment, including flogging, are strictly prohibited under international human rights law, including the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which Saudi Arabia has ratified. It sees this as a **cruel and shocking act** and called for his immediate and unconditional release. It also called on the Saudi authorities to release unconditionally Raif Badawi's lawyer, and all human rights defenders and other prisoners of conscience detained and sentenced for merely exercising their right to freedom of expression.

Parliament considered that **Saudi Arabia would be a more credible and effective partner in fighting terrorist organisations** such as the so-called Islamic State and al-Qaeda if it did not engage in anachronistic and extremist practices, such as public beheadings, stoning and other forms of torture, similar to those committed by IS.

Lastly, Parliament called on the European Union and its Member States to **reconsider their relationship with Saudi Arabia**, in a way that allows it to pursue its economic, energy and security interests, while not undermining the credibility of its core human rights commitments.