Resolution on Zimbabwe, the case of human rights defender Itai Dzamara

2015/2710(RSP) - 21/05/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on Zimbabwe, and the case of human rights defender Itai Dzamara.

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

It strongly condemned the forced disappearance of Itai Dzamara a prominent Zimbabwean human rights activist, leader of the Occupy Africa Unity Square movement and dissident of President Mugabe, who was reportedly abducted by five unidentified armed men in the suburbs of Harare. Noting that his whereabouts remained unknown and there was serious concern for his safety, Members called for his immediate and unconditional release.

The Government of Zimbabwe was urged to fully comply with the High Court order directing them to search for Mr Dzamara, and to take all necessary measures to find Mr Dzamara as well as ensure the safety and security of his wife and family, and his colleagues and supporters.

Parliament went on to state it was deeply concerned at reports by human rights organisations of **increasing political violence and harassment of political opposition**, and at the severe restrictions and intimidation faced by human rights defenders, who are often beaten by the police and arrested on false charges. It regretted that, since the last elections and the adoption of the new constitution in 2013, **little progress had been made** with regard to the rule of law and in particular towards reforming the human rights environment.

It asked the EU to **step up its political dialogue** on human rights on the basis of Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement, and notably to encourage the government to repeal or appropriately amend the Public Order and Security Act and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, in order to bring an end to their abuse. Parliament **deplored the absence of a strong and enforceable human rights clause in the interim Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)** concluded with four Eastern and Southern African (ESA) states, including Zimbabwe. The EU delegation in Harare was asked to continue to offer its assistance to Zimbabwe in order to improve the human rights situation. Members insisted that the EU must **ensure that the development funding to Zimbabwe effectively addressed the needs of the population**, notably through civil society organisations, and that political and economic reforms financed by it were implemented. They noted that in February 2015 the EU resumed its aid to Zimbabwe, in the form of a EUR 234 million National Indicative Programme aimed at helping Zimbabwe become a more democratic and prosperous country.

Lastly, Parliament called for **concerted action by the international community**, in particular the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which had an important role to play as guarantor to the Global Political Agreement (GPA), and it stressed the need for implementation of the agreement under which Zimbabwe had committed to ensuring that both its legislation and its procedures and practices were in accordance with international human rights laws.