

# Resolution on Pakistan, in particular the attack in Lahore

2016/2644(RSP) - 14/04/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on Pakistan, in particular the attack in Lahore.

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

It **condemned the suicide bombing** at a Lahore playground, on 27 March 2016 which killed 73 people, injuring more than 300, including many women and children. The attack was perpetrated by an Islamic-terrorist group, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, which stated that it intentionally targeted Christians. However, most of those wounded and killed were Muslims and all of them were Pakistanis. It called on the Pakistani authorities, in particular the local and provincial authorities, to ensure that these acts are effectively investigated and prosecuted.

Parliament called on the Commission, Vice-President/High Representative Federica Mogherini, the European External Action Service and the Council to **fully engage with the Government of Pakistan in tackling the threat posed by terrorism**. The HR/VP was asked to keep Parliament regularly informed of the progress made in these efforts.

**Blasphemy laws:** Parliament was concerned at the continued use of blasphemy laws in Pakistan and believed that this is heightening the climate of religious intolerance. It noted that Christians and other minorities face not only persecution by extremists, but also legal discrimination, through Pakistan's blasphemy laws, which are discriminatory and are widely misused by those with personal and political motives. Muslims themselves continue to be charged under these laws, and Members called on the Government of Pakistan to **review these laws and their application**. They also wanted to see the proper and swift delivery of justice in all blasphemy cases, noting, in particular, the case of Asia Bibi on which they strongly encouraged the Supreme Court to reach a decision. Parliament added that some extremist groups are allowed to develop their ideology and activities unhampered, such as certain student unions at the universities and the Khatm-e-Nubuwwat Lawyers' Forum, which is reportedly the driving force behind the rise in prosecutions for blasphemy charges in the Pakistani courts and is against any attempts by legislators to reform the relevant law.

**Reform:** Members welcomed the government's reform initiatives such as the bill to criminalise child marriage, and the act to protect women from violence and harassment, the unblocking of YouTube, the decision declaring Holi, Diwali and Easter as holidays for religious minorities. However, they recalled in this context the **National Action Plan**, the promised reforms of the madrassas, notably government action against hate speech, and the still outstanding police and judicial reform. Accordingly, Parliament felt that more ambitious measures should be taken in the future, in particular in the field of education (excluding negative biases and prejudices from curricula and textbooks) and in the prosecution of those inciting violence.

**Poverty:** emphasising that, when combating terrorism and religious extremism, it was crucial to tackle the root causes by addressing poverty, and ensuring religious tolerance, Parliament called on the Pakistani authorities to **tackle social and economic exclusion**, including that of a large majority of Christians and other religious minorities, who lead a precarious existence.

Lastly, Parliament noted with grave concern the **dramatic increase in the use of the death penalty in Pakistan**, including, highly regrettably, against child offenders, and called for a moratorium on capital punishment to be reinstated with a view to abolishing the death penalty in Pakistan.