Resolution on freedom of expression in Sudan, notably the case of Mohamed Zine al-Abidine

2017/2961(RSP) - 16/11/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on freedom of expression in Sudan, notably the case of Mohamed Zine al –Abidine.

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

Parliament expressed its deep concern at the **sentencing of Mohamed Zine al-Abidine for violating the journalism code of ethics,** by the Press Court in Khartoum on 23 October 2017 to a suspended jail term with a five-year probation period. It called on the Sudanese authorities to immediately review all charges against him.

Mohamed Zine al-Abidine published an article on 23 February 2012 in the Al-Tayar newspaper criticised the alleged corruption in the family of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir.

Parliament expressed deep concern over the **situation regarding freedom of expression** in Sudan, on-going censorship and continued seizures of newspapers, and increasing restrictions on journalists. It also deplored the fact that numerous reports have emerged regarding **repeated violations of media freedom** and continued harassment of journalists by the Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS).

The Sudanese authorities were urged to **put an end to all forms of harassment, intimidation and assault against journalists and defenders of freedom of expression** and to undertake democratic reforms in order to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights in the country, including freedom of expression.

Noting with concern the **proposed Press and Printing Act of 2017**, which includes further controversial restrictions on online publications and provisions for lengthier suspensions of newspapers and journalists, Parliament encouraged the Government of Sudan to amend the Press and Publication Act of 2009 in order to provide more protection to journalists and newspaper publishers.

Lastly, Members called for the EU and its Member States to **provide support to civil society** organisations by means of technical assistance and capacity-building programmes, so as to improve their human rights advocacy.