Resolution on the situation of LGBTI people in Uganda

2019/2879(RSP) - 24/10/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 521 votes to 4, with 110 abstentions, a resolution on the situation of LGBTI people in Uganda.

The text adopted in plenary had been tabled as a joint resolution by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA and GUE/NGL groups.

In recent weeks, Uganda has experienced a rise in extremely homophobic rhetoric from the authorities, in particular from Simon Lokodo, Ugandan State Minister in charge of Ethics and Integrity, who on 10 October 2019 announced plans to reintroduce the anti-homosexuality bill, which would include the death penalty, for 'aggravated homosexuality'. The Anti-Homosexuality Act banning the promotion of homosexuality and imposing the death penalty for homosexual acts was already introduced in 2014, at the initiative of President Museveni, but was eventually declared null and void by the Ugandan constitutional court. The international community at large has strongly condemned the proposed law.

Members recalled that current provisions in the penal code violate human rights and criminalise homosexuality, Same-sex sexual acts remain illegal and punishable with up to life imprisonment. The Ugandan constitution bans discrimination on a number of grounds but does not extend this ban to discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation.

Parliament expressed deep concern at the resurgence of the anti-homosexuality bill in the Ugandan political debate. It strongly condemned Simon Lokodo's rhetoric for fuelling homophobia and hate, and reiterated its fierce opposition to all forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation as well as any incitement to hatred and violence towards LGBTI people.

Members rejected emphatically the use of the death penalty under any circumstances, including any legislation that would impose the death penalty for homosexuality. They regretted that Ugandan law is still highly discriminatory against LGBTI people and urged the Ugandan authorities to review any law criminalising homosexuality and LGBTI activists.

Deeply worried about the general deterioration of the human rights situation of LGBTI people in Uganda, including the increasing violations of their social rights, Members urged the Ugandan authorities to investigate thoroughly and impartially any violence or attacks against LGBTI people and to hold the perpetrators to account. They called on the Ugandan Government to strengthen redress mechanisms within the police force for human rights violations.

Parliament called on the EU to:

- continue to monitor the situation of LGBT people closely and to actively support civil society organisations and human rights defenders and LGBTI people on the ground;

- effectively make full use of the political dialogue provided for under the Cotonou Agreement, as well as the LGBTI Toolkit and its accompanying guidelines, in their dialogue with the Ugandan authorities in order to help decriminalise homosexuality, reduce violence and discrimination and protect LGBTI human rights defenders;

- enhance the defence and promotion of human rights in Uganda, notably through targeted support to civil society organisations and full implementation of the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders.

Parliament recalled that 32 of a total of 54 African countries criminalise samesex relations, and Mauritania, Sudan, northern Nigeria and Somalia punish homosexuality by death. The Commission and the Council are called on once again to include the mention of non-discrimination based on sexual orientation in any future agreement that replaces the Cotonou Agreement.