Resolution on the deteriorating situation of human rights in Egypt, in particular the case of the activists of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)

2020/2912(RSP) - 17/12/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 434 votes to 209, with 42 abstentions a resolution on the deteriorating human rights situation in Egypt, in particular the case of the activists of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR).

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

Condemnation of repression

Parliament deplored once again the continuing and intensifying crackdown on fundamental rights and on human rights defenders, lawyers, protesters, journalists, bloggers, trade unionists, students, children, women's rights and gender equality activists, LGBTI people, solely in response to their exercise of their fundamental freedoms or their expression of dissent. It also expressed outraged at the recent arrests of senior EIPR activists in retaliation for their legitimate meeting with European diplomats in Cairo. While welcoming their provisional release, it urged the authorities to drop all charges against them, end all forms of harassment and intimidation against them.

The resolution stressed that the current arrests and detentions are part of a wider pattern of intimidation of human rights organisations and called for an immediate end to such acts. It also deplored the use of anti-terrorism legislation to stigmatise and criminalise the work of these defenders.

The Egyptian authorities were called upon to:

- ensure that detainees have full access to their families, lawyers of their choice and adequate medical care, and that credible investigations are carried out into any allegations of ill-treatment or torture;

- reduce the occupancy rate of places of detention and grant unrestricted access to Tora Maximum Security Prison to an independent organisation to monitor conditions of detention;

- declare a moratorium on the death penalty with a view to its abolition and to release immediately all juveniles on death row;

- adopt a comprehensive law on violence against women and a national strategy to enforce approved laws against sexual violence;

- put an end to the arrests and prosecutions of members of the LGBTI community or people in general on the basis of their sexual orientation.

Parliament deplored the attempt by the Egyptian authorities to mislead and impede progress in the investigations into the abduction, torture and murder of Italian researcher Giulio Regeni in 2016. It called on the EU and Member States to urge the Egyptian authorities to cooperate with the Italian judicial authorities to allow a prompt, transparent and impartial investigation into the murder.

Review of relations with Egypt

While supporting the Egyptian people in their aspirations to establish a free, stable and democratic country, Members reminded the Egyptian authorities that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is an essential element of EU-Egypt relations. It called on the VP/HR and the Member States to react in a united and resolute manner, also in coordination with other like-minded partners, to the repression and human rights violations in Egypt.

Parliament reiterated its call for a profound and comprehensive review of the EU’s relations with Egypt, considering that the human rights situation in Egypt required a thorough review of the Commission's budget support operations. It called on the EU, with a view to negotiating new partnership priorities, to establish clear benchmarks that make further cooperation a centrepiece in achieving progress in the reform of democratic institutions, the rule of law and human rights, and to mainstream human rights concerns in all talks with Egyptian authorities.