Resolution on Rwanda, the case of Paul Rusesabagina

2021/2543(RSP) - 11/02/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 659 votes to 1, with 35 abstentions, a resolution on Rwanda, the case of Paul Rusesabagina.

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

The Rwandan genocide and civil war of 1994 continue to have a negative impact on the stability of the region.

The human rights defender, Belgian citizen and US resident, Paul Rusesabagina, a strong critic of President Paul Kagame and the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) government, was arrested in Kigali on 31 August 2020 on 13 charges that included financing terrorism, armed robbery, abduction, arson, attempted murder, battery and assault.

On 27 August 2020, Mr Rusesabagina was forcibly transferred from Dubai to Kigali in uncertain circumstances and only reappeared on 31 August 2020 at the headquarters of the Rwandan Investigation Bureau. However, UAE authorities deny any involvement in his transfer and subsequent arrest.

Parliament condemned the enforced disappearance, illegal rendition and incommunicado detention of Paul Rusesabagina. It denounced the Rwandan authorities' restrictions of fundamental rights and freedoms and arbitrary use of pre-trial detention for repressing dissent, without providing Mr Rusesabagina with the minimum guarantees for a fair trial or allowing him regular contact with his family.

The resolution called on the Rwandan authorities to:

- allow Mr Rusesabagina to undergo a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal applying international human rights standards;

- ensure a prompt and fair appeal for Mr Rusesabagina that meets the standards set by Rwandan and international law;

- guarantee the physical integrity and psychological well-being of Mr Rusesabagina;

- ensure the separation of administrative, legislative and judicial powers, in particular the independence of the judiciary;

- open up its political sphere and improve its human rights record;

- respect and fully support the right to protest, the right to freedom of expression, and the right to assembly, and not seek to restrict those rights.

Parliament called on the EU to take immediate action to ensure that the legality of the arrest and trial of Mr Rusesabagina are investigated and that his rights as an EU citizen are upheld at all stages of this process.

Lastly, the European External Action Service, the Commission and the EU Special Representative for Human Rights are called on to strengthen the human rights dialogue with Rwanda at the highest levels in order to ensure that the country abides by its bilateral and international commitments; stresses that in the context of international development work in Rwanda, much greater priority should be given to human rights, the rule of law, and transparent and responsive governance.