Resolution on the death penalty in Saudi Arabia, notably the cases of Mustafa Hashem al-Darwish and Abdullah al-Howaiti

2021/2787(RSP) - 08/07/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 661 votes to 3, with 23 abstentions, a resolution on the death penalty in Saudi Arabia, notably the cases of Mustafa Hashem al-Darwish and Abdullah al-Howaiti.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA, ECR and the Left groups.

Saudi Arabia committed to abolishing the death penalty for all child offenders without exception by 2016 through new legislation. However, on 15 June 2021, Mustafa Hashem al-Darwish, a young Saudi man from the Shi'a minority, was executed for offences that rights groups say he may have committed as a minor. In addition, Abdullah al-Howaiti was tried in a mass trial of six individuals in an armed robbery case. Al-Howaiti was arrested in May 2017, when he was 14 years old. He was sentenced to death on 27 October 2019 despite the fact that his DNA sample was taken after his arrest, invalidating his identification as possible suspect. In 2021, he still remains in detention and on death row.

Parliament strongly condemns the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's ongoing execution of child offenders despite its claims that it has abolished such executions, including the recent execution of Mustafa Hashem al-Darwish for crimes that may have occurred while he was a minor following his conviction in an unfair trial involving a confession obtained from him under torture, as well as the fact that there are currently at least 40 detainees in Saudi Arabia at risk of execution, including at least nine for alleged crimes committed as minors, and

peaceful critics of the government.

Saudi Arabia is called on to:

- confirm that Abdullah al-Howaiti, Mohammed al-Faraj and all other child offenders currently on death row will not be executed, that 'confessions' extracted under torture will be excluded from their cases, and that all child offenders will be granted a fair trial without the imposition of the death penalty;

- genuinely abolish the death penalty for child offenders;

- implement a moratorium on executions pending their abolition;

- review the cases of all prisoners currently under a death sentence with the aim of commuting their sentences or offering a new and fair trial where the death penalty will not be imposed;

Parliament urged the EU delegation and the diplomatic missions of EU Member States in Saudi Arabia to urgently request to visit child offenders detained on death row.

The Council is urged to suspend all EU exports of mass surveillance technology and other

dual-use items to Saudi Arabia that can be used to facilitate internal repression and silence

civil society.

Lastly, the resolution denounced the fact that the Saudi political system remains profoundly undemocratic and continues severely repressing most dissenting voices despite the announcement of ambitious human rights-related reforms. Parliament strongly supports the application of the Global Human Rights Sanctions Mechanism against those responsible for grave human rights violations in Saudi Arabia, including the murder of the journalist Jamal Khashoggi.