Resolution on the risk of the death penalty and the execution of singer Yahaya Sharif-Aminu for blasphemy in Nigeria

2023/2650(RSP) - 20/04/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 550 votes to 7, with 4 abstentions, a resolution on the risk of the death penalty and the execution of singer Yahaya Sharif-Aminu for blasphemy in Nigeria.

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

As a reminder, on 10 August 2020, Nigerian singer Yahaya Sharif-Aminu was brought before an upper Sharia court in Kano State, where he was tried without legal representation and sentenced to death by hanging for alleged blasphemy in a song he composed and shared on social media containing allegedly derogatory comments regarding the Prophet Muhammad.

The resolution stated that blasphemy laws are in clear breach of both international human rights obligations and in contradiction with the Nigerian Constitution.

Parliament urged the Nigerian authorities to:

- immediately and unconditionally release Yahaya Sharif-Aminu, drop all charges against him and guarantee his due process rights. It also called for the release of Rhoda Jatau, Mubarak Bala and others who face blasphemy allegations;

- uphold human rights throughout the country by ensuring that federal, state and Sharia law do not deny Nigerians protection under the national Constitution and international conventions;

- repeal the blasphemy laws at federal and state level;

- tackle the impunity surrounding blasphemy accusations;

- immediately withdraw the use of capital punishment for blasphemy and take steps towards full abolition of the death penalty.

Lasty, the EU and its Member States, as key development partners, are called on to raise individual cases, human rights concerns and blasphemy laws with the Nigerian side.