Resolution on Iraq, notably the situation of women’s rights and the recent proposal to amend the Personal Status Law

2024/2858(RSP) - 10/10/2024 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on Iraq, notably the situation of women’s rights and the recent proposal to amend the Personal Status Law.

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

Iraq’s Parliament is drafting highly restrictive amendments to Law 188/1959 (the Personal Status Law), affecting women’s rights. As a result, family matters, including marriage, divorce and child custody, would effectively fall under the remit of religious rather than civil courts, entailing disturbing discrepancies along religious lines, according to UN experts.

Parliament urged Iraq’s Parliament to **fully and immediately reject the proposed amendments to Law 188/1959 (the Personal Status Law)** underlining that the amendments would violate Iraq’s international obligations regarding women’s fundamental rights, and result in a significant rollback, an increasingly negative international reputation and the withholding of some foreign assistance from bilateral and multilateral organisations. The VP/HR and the Member States are called on to condemn the proposed amendments.

The resolution urged Iraq to adopt a **national action plan** to eliminate child marriage, criminalise marital rape, fight domestic violence and strengthen women’s and girls’ rights, in line with the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Members called for a reinforced partnership with the Human Rights Committee of Iraq’s Parliament, in line with Iraq’s international obligations.

Parliament recalled that the current Personal Status Law requires children with at least one parent who has converted to Islam to become Muslims themselves. Members deplored the fact that the proposed amendments to the law, if enacted, would lead to an even more radical application of Sharia and would also affect the country’s minorities.

Members also called for strengthened legal protection in the penal code for women and child victims of domestic violence.