Resolution on Egypt: violence against Sudanese refugees

2006/2504(RSP) - 19/01/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on Egypt.

The resolution was tabled by the PES, ALDE, EPP-ED, GUE/NGL, UEN, Greens/ALE groups.

Parliament recalls that on 30 December 2005, the Egyptian security forces evacuated by force more than 2 500 Sudanese migrants, refugees and asylum seekers who were settled in Moustafa Mahmoud Square, in Cairo, in front of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Headquarters, requesting to be relocated to third countries since 29 September 2005. Reportedly, 2 000 police officers fired water cannons into the crowd and beat individuals with clubs in order to end the sit-in. Parliament condemns the violence of the Egyptian police that resulted in deaths and injuries, and insists that the situation could and should have been resolved peacefully. Parliament calls on the Egyptian authorities to ensure that police officers act in compliance with international standards and to put an end to the disproportionate use of force.

Parliament asks the Egyptian authorities to **halt the forced deportation to Sudan of 462 Sudanese nationals**, as the group is believed to include asylum seekers and refugees recognised by the UNHCR, and to respect the principle of non-refoulement. MEPs also call on the Egyptian authorities to provide information on the places where arrested Sudanese migrants and refugees have been settled or detained since 30 December 2005 and to release all Sudanese nationals detained during or following the events, unless they are to be charged with a recognisable criminal offence. The Egyptian authorities should, moreover, ensure that all those held have full access to lawyers and to their families, and receive adequate medical treatment when necessary. Parliament expresses its concern at the allegation of torture and ill treatment and appeals to the Egyptian authorities to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of all migrants and refugees.

Parliament criticises the UNHCR for having been too slow in finding a solution for the Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers. The Commission and the Member States are called upon to establish a true partnership with the UNHCR by offering both political and financial support to assist the work of the UNHCR in Cairo, in order to maintain a constant dialogue with the Egyptian authorities, emphasising that the situation of the Sudanese migrants and refugees needs to be resolved peacefully and in accordance with the 1951 Geneva Convention and international humanitarian law.

Parliament calls on the Council and the Commission to make provision in the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) for a specific programme to combat the use of torture and degrading and inhuman treatment.

Lastly, Parliament welcomes the worldwide calls to release Ayman Nour, the leader of the secular El Ghad party who has been sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment for allegedly falsifying some of the 50 signatures needed to register his party. It strongly urges the Egyptian authorities to ensure that the Ayman Nour is well treated and not subjected to torture or other forms of ill-treatment.