Resolution on Nigeria

2007/2537(RSP) - 15/03/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

Following the debate with took place in plenary on 13 March 2007, the European Parliament adopted, by 36 votes to 24 with 1 abstention, a resolution on Nigeria, which had been tabled by the EPP-ED group.

Parliament calls on the Nigerian Government to take immediate and effective measures to protect its citizens, to put an end to the violence, widespread corruption and impunity for the perpetrators of human rights violations, and to promote actively respect for human rights. It notes that impunity remains the rule rather than the exception, since very few of the perpetrators of violence and human rights violations are investigated and brought to justice, and such impunity is in itself one of the most important obstacles to tackling and ending human rights abuse and violence. Members also note that Islamic Sharia courts have jurisdiction over criminal cases in 12 of Nigeria's 36 States. These courts continue to hand down death sentences as well as sentences of flogging and amputation. Although executions and amputations are no longer being carried out, trials do not conform to international standards, for instance with regard to the right to a lawyer, and informing the accused of their rights, and they tend to discriminate against women.

Parliament calls on the Nigerian Government:

- to **abolish the death penalty** and to intervene in individual cases of persons tried under Sharia law and sentenced to death, amputation, flogging or other inhuman and degrading treatment;
- ensure all stakeholders in the forthcoming national elections in April publicly declare their commitment to ending political violence, killings, intimidation and other human rights abuses as well as impunity for such crimes;
- take all necessary measures to address pre-election concerns regarding restrictions on the independence of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), abusive conduct and harassment by security forces, and any other obstacle to freedom of expression and opinion and other basic requirements for free and fair elections.

Parliament goes on to note that the Nigerian Parliament is currently examining a Bill entitled the 'Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act'. It calls on the Nigerian Government not to adopt the proposed 'Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act' in its current form, since it contains infringements of the basic human rights of freedom of expression and opinion, in particular since it envisages the five-year prison sentence for anyone involved publicly or privately in positive representation of, or advocacy for, same sex relationships.

It should be noted that the proposal for joint resolution on the same subject, proposed by the PES, ALDE, Greens/ALE, GUE/NGL, was not adopted in Plenary.