## Basic information

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| **2011/2881(RSP)**<br><br>RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects | Procedure completed |
| Resolution on the situation in Egypt and Syria, in particular of Christian communities<br><br>**Subject**<br><br>6.10.04 Third-country political situation, local and regional conflicts<br><br>**Geographical area**<br><br>Bahrain<br>Egypt<br>Syria<br>Yemen | |

## Key events

| Date | Event | Reference | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12/10/2011 | Debate in Parliament |  | Summary |
| 27/10/2011 | Decision by Parliament | T7-0471/2011 | Summary |
| 27/10/2011 | Results of vote in Parliament |  | |
| 27/10/2011 | End of procedure in Parliament | | |

## Technical information

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| **Procedure reference** | 2011/2881(RSP) |
| **Procedure type** | RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects |
| **Procedure subtype** | Resolution on statement |
| **Legal basis** | Rules of Procedure EP 136-p2 |
| **Stage reached in procedure** | Procedure completed |

## Documentation gateway

**European Parliament**

| Document type | Committee | Reference | Date | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Motion for a resolution | | B7-0542/2011 | 24/10/2011 | |
| Motion for a resolution | | B7-0545/2011 | 24/10/2011 | |
| Motion for a resolution | | B7-0547/2011 | 24/10/2011 | |
| Motion for a resolution | | B7-0548/2011 | 24/10/2011 | |
| Motion for a resolution | | B7-0549/2011 | 24/10/2011 | |
| Motion for a resolution | | B7-0551/2011 | 24/10/2011 | |

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| Motion for a resolution | | B7-0555/2011 | 24/10/2011 | |
| Text adopted by Parliament, single reading | | T7-0471/2011 | 27/10/2011 | Summary |

# Resolution on the situation in Egypt and Syria, in particular of Christian communities

2011/2881(RSP) - 27/10/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 12 October 2011, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in Egypt and Syria, in particular of Christian communities.

The resolution was tabled by the, S&D, EFD, ECR, ALDE, Greens/EFA and EPP groups.

**Egypt:** Parliament notes that at least 25 Egyptian citizens were killed and more than 300 wounded on 9 October in Cairo during a peaceful march organised by Coptic Christians, heading towards the Maspero state television building, to protest against an attack on a Coptic church in Aswan. Since March 2011 tens of thousands of Copts have reportedly left Egypt. Members strongly condemn the killing of protestors in Egypt, and **call on the Egyptian authorities to release the 28 arrested Christians in Maspero** as well all others arrested. They stress that it is important that an independent, thorough and transparent investigation into the events in Maspero should be conducted by an independent civil judiciary. Noting that more violence was incited by Egyptian state television when people were called upon to 'protect the army', Members state that the role of the media has to be fully addressed. They emphasise the responsibility of the Egyptian Government to **ensure the safety of all citizens in the country** and that those responsible for the violence be brought to justice, and that Coptic Christian communities do not fall victim to violent attacks and can live in peace and freely express their beliefs throughout the country. Parliament also calls for the **adequate protection of the churches** in order to put an end to the continuous aggression and destruction of churches by Islamic extremists. The Egyptian authorities are urged to end discrimination against Coptic Christians, for example by deleting references to religion from all official documents, and equal opportunities for all citizens in Egypt to have access to all public and political posts, including representation in the armed forces, in Parliament and in Government. The Egyptian authorities must make sure that **the new constitution is inclusive** and leaves no possibility for discrimination against anyone in Egyptian society.

Parliament considers that **measures should be adopted by the EU in the event of serious violations of the human rights of any citizens in Egypt**. It underlines the necessity for the EU to stand ready to adopt further measures in order to assist the Egyptian people who are striving for a democratic future through peaceful means. It also calls on Member States to abide strictly by **the EU Common Position on arms exports**, urging the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, to urge Member States to implement fully and comply with the requirements of the Common Position.

Members go on to stress the importance of holding free, fair and transparent elections to the People's Assembly and to the Shoura Council in late 2011 and early 2012, and presidential elections in 2012, in Egypt, and call for the **interim government of Egypt to be replaced as soon as possible** by a government established in accordance with the results of free elections. They note that more than **12000 civilians have been arrested under the current emergency law since March 2011 and are tried before military courts** which violate the right to a fair trial and deny defendants the right to appeal. Parliament calls on the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) to put an end to the emergency law immediately. It wants the Egyptian authorities to adopt a new association law in accordance with international human rights standards and in close consultation with NGOs and human rights groups.

Lastly, Members express deep concerns about the health condition of imprisoned blogger Maikel Nabil Sanad Maikel Nabil Sanad who was arrested by the military police on 28 March 2011 for voicing his opinion online, including criticism of the role the Egyptian military played during and after the popular revolution, and sentenced to three years' imprisonment on charges of 'insulting the military' after an unfair fast-track trial in a military court. They call for his immediate release, and urge the Egyptian Government to put an end without delay to military trials of civilians.

**Syria:** Parliament firmly **condemns the disproportionate and brutal use of force** against peaceful protesters perpetrated by the Syrian authorities, which may amount to crimes against humanity, noting that according to UN estimates, over 3 000 people have lost their lives, many more have been injured and thousands detained. It reiterates its call on **President Bashar al-Assad and his regime to relinquish power immediately** to allow a democratic transition to take place in Syria. Members welcome the positive statement made by the Council on the efforts of the Syrian political opposition to establish a united platform, and reiterate their call on VP/HR Ashton, the Council and the Commission to **support further the emergence of organised Syrian democratic opposition forces both within and outside the country**. Parliament wants an independent, transparent and effective investigation into the killings, arrests, arbitrary detention and alleged forced disappearances and takes the view that the UN Security Council should refer Syria to the International Criminal Court (ICC) with the aim of seeing justice done for the Syrian people. Parliament welcomes the commitment of the EU to continue to press for **strong UN action to increase international pressure**, reiterating its call on the members of the UNSC, and in particular Russia and China, not to block a resolution condemning the use of lethal force by the Syrian regime, urging that this use of force be ended, and to put in place sanctions for failure to do so. Members strongly support the EU decision of 23 September 2011 to adopt additional sanctions against the Syrian regime.

Members are deeply concerned about the **situation of Christians in Syria, in particular their safety, and condemn actions aimed at inciting inter-confessional conflict**. They note there are reports that estimate that the Christian population in Syria may have dropped from 10% to 8% and that thousands of Iraqi Christians came to Syria to escape targeted violence in Iraq. Many Christians in Syria fear that they will become victims of sectarian violence in the country, and the current and future Syrian authorities are urged to provide efficient protection for the Christian communities. Parliament expresses its support for the Christian community in the country and, at the same time, encourages this community to play a positive and constructive

role in the ongoing events in Syria. It wants Syrian opposition forces to declare or reconfirm their commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Lastly, Parliament strongly condemns the acts of violence, harassment or intimidation of some Syrian citizens taking place on EU territory and recalls that the right to protest freely and peacefully in safety is fully guaranteed in the EU Member States, including for those protesting against the rule of President Bashar al-Assad.