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B7-0145/2014

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Egypt
(2014/2532(RSP))

Cristian Dan Preda, Elmar Brok, Tokia Saïfi, Marietta Giannakou, Davor Ivo Stier, Alf Svensson, Andrej Plenković, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Ria Oomen-Ruijten, Peter Šťastný, Elena Băsescu, Monica Luisa Macovei, Marco Scurria, Salvatore Iacolino, Eduard Kukan, Salvador Sedó i Alabart, Roberta Angelilli
on behalf of the PPE Group

B7-0145/2014

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Egypt
(2014/2532(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Egypt,
 - having regard to the speech by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR), Catherine Ashton, on 11 September 2013 at the European Parliament, and her statements on 3 October 2013, 27 November 2013, 1, 23 and 24 December 2013 and 11 and 19 January 2014,
 - having regard to the EU-Egypt Association Agreement of 2001, which entered into force in 2004, strengthened by the Action Plan of 2007, and to the Commission's progress report on its implementation of 20 March 2013,
 - having regard to the Constitutional Declaration issued in Egypt on 8 July 2013, proposing a roadmap for constitutional amendments and new elections,
 - having regard to the new Egyptian constitution, adopted by the Constitutional Committee on 1 December 2013, and to the outcome of the referendum held on 14 and 15 January 2014,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to both of which Egypt is a party,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas a series of bomb attacks and violent clashes during demonstrations marking the third anniversary of the popular revolt that resulted in the toppling of the Mubarak regime have led to many new deaths and injuries;
- B. whereas on 1 December 2013 the new Egyptian draft constitution was approved for submission to a referendum by the Constitutional Committee composed of 50 experts, including a wide range of political and religious leaders but with no representative of the Muslim Brotherhood; whereas on 14 and 15 January 2014 the referendum on the constitution took place, with a 38.6 % turnout and 98.1 % support for the constitution; whereas according to a statement by VP/HR Catherine Ashton 'while the EU is not in a position to make a thorough assessment of the conduct of the referendum or verify alleged irregularities, these do not appear to have fundamentally affected the outcome';
- C. whereas a large number of security personnel were deployed nationwide to ensure the security of the referendum; whereas several violent incidents took place during the period of the referendum; whereas, according to the Home Affairs Ministry, nine people died and another 444 were detained in incidents relating to the referendum;

- D. whereas since July 2013 more than a thousand people have been killed and many more wounded in clashes between supporters and opponents of ousted president Morsi and between protesters and the security forces;
- E. whereas on 12 November 2013 the state of emergency and curfew that was put in place on 14 August 2013 was lifted;
- F. whereas civil-society organisations have a crucial role to play in this critical period of political and social transition in Egypt; whereas a free and independent press and media form a key part of society in any true democracy;
- G. whereas ousted president Morsi is facing four separate criminal trials, three of which relate to his time in office; whereas the first trial opened on 4 November 2013 and a new session has been scheduled for 1 February 2014; whereas on 20 December 2013 Muslim Brotherhood lawyers acting on behalf of ousted president Morsi submitted a formal complaint to the International Criminal Court (ICC);
- H. whereas tensions between Muslims and Coptic Christians have increased in Egypt since the removal from power of President Morsi last summer and have led to the destruction of scores of Coptic Christian churches;
- I. whereas 2013 in Egypt saw the highest number of incidents involving Christians in the world, with at least 167 cases reported in the media; whereas there were nearly 500 attempts to close or destroy churches in the country and at least 83 cases of religiously motivated killings of Christians;
- J. whereas security in the unstable Sinai region is further deteriorating amid regular violent attacks on security forces; whereas on 24 December 2013 a suicide car bomb attack took place outside a police headquarters in Mansoura in the Nile Delta, killing 16 people and wounding more than 100; whereas on 25 December 2013 the Egyptian Government declared the Muslim Brotherhood to be a terrorist organisation as a response to the deadly attack; whereas the Muslim Brotherhood denies being responsible for the attack, while a Sinai-based al-Qaeda-inspired group has claimed responsibility;
- K. whereas thousands of people lose their lives and disappear in Sinai every year, while others, mainly refugees from Eritrea and Somalia, including many women and children, are kidnapped and held to ransom by human traffickers; whereas refugees are also kidnapped in Sudanese refugee camps and brought into Sinai; whereas victims of human traffickers are abused in the most dehumanising manner and are subject to systemic violence, torture, sexual exploitation and forced labour, or killed for the organ trade;
- L. whereas women are in a particularly vulnerable situation in the current period of transition and whereas women's rights are not fully respected;
- M. whereas Egypt's economy is in great difficulty; whereas since 2011 the unemployment rate has risen and poverty rates worsened;

- N. whereas, in line with its reviewed European Neighbourhood Policy and notably the ‘more for more’ approach, the EU’s level and scope of engagement with Egypt is incentive-based and therefore dependent on progress with regard to the country’s respecting its commitments, including those on democracy, the rule of law, human rights and gender equality;
1. Strongly condemns all acts of violence, terrorism, incitement and hate speech; urges all political actors and security forces to show the utmost restraint and avoid provocation, with the aim of avoiding further violence in the best interests of the country; extends its sincere condolences to the families of the victims;
 2. Urges the authorities to ensure prompt, independent and impartial investigations into all killings and abuses and to bring those responsible to justice; calls for action to be taken to reform the security sector, establish adequate internal review procedures and train the security forces to respect human rights in the policing of protests and to prevent torture, ill-treatment and sexual violence;
 3. Notes the result of the referendum, which clearly endorses the new Egyptian constitution; welcomes the new Egyptian constitution’s reference to a civilian government, absolute freedom of belief and the equality of all citizens, the provision on children’s rights, the ban on torture in all its forms and manifestations, the prohibition and criminalisation of all forms of slavery and the commitment to abide by international human rights treaties signed by Egypt;
 4. Calls on the authorities to fully implement the approved articles and provisions, in particular those pertaining to the rights and freedoms of the Egyptian people, and to continue on the path towards an inclusive and civilian-led democracy, built on tolerance and reconciliation; calls on the Egyptian authorities to avoid the use of military courts to judge civilians;
 5. Reiterates that the political transition process should next lead to free, fair, inclusive and non-violent parliamentary and presidential elections within the timeframes defined by the new constitution; recalls that power should be transferred directly after any elections to the democratically elected civilian authorities; stresses that constructive and inclusive political dialogue, reconciliation and reintegration are the only path to democracy;
 6. Urges the Egyptian interim authorities and security forces to ensure the security of all citizens, irrespective of their political views, affiliation or confession, to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, to protect the freedoms of association, of peaceful assembly, of expression and of the press, to commit to dialogue and non-violence, and to respect and fulfil the country’s international obligations;
 7. Is concerned about Law 107 of 2013 on regulating the right to public gatherings, processions and peaceful protests, and urges the Egyptian interim authorities to guarantee the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly, under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and abidance by international standards;
 8. Calls for the release of all political detainees held for peacefully exercising their right to

freedom of assembly, association and expression, and a swift and transparent review of all criminal cases; stresses the importance of free and fair trials for all those detained; suggests reforming the judicial authority law to ensure a genuine separation of powers;

9. Stresses once again the importance of the contribution of civil society and the free media to building deep and sustainable democracy in Egypt; calls on the Egyptian interim authorities to implement Article 65 of the new constitution, which states that ‘all individuals have the right to express their opinion through speech, writing, imagery or any other means of expression and publication’; calls on the interim Government to guarantee that domestic and international civil society organisations and journalists can operate freely in the country;
10. Strongly condemns the violence against the Coptic community and the destruction of a large number of churches, community centres and businesses throughout the country; expresses concern that the authorities failed to take adequate security measures to protect the Coptic community in spite of many warnings;
11. Is concerned about the increase in acts of terrorism and violent attacks in the Sinai, and calls on the Egyptian interim authorities to restore security there; calls on the Egyptian interim authorities to investigate the cases of human trafficking, murder, torture, sexual exploitation and organ trading and to take appropriate measures to arrest and prosecute members of trafficking syndicates by applying national and international law; recalls Article 89 of the new constitution, which forbids slavery and all forms of oppression and forced exploitation of human beings;
12. Calls on the Egyptian interim authorities to develop, adopt and implement legislation to combat all forms of gender-based violence, to ensure effective and accessible reporting channels and protection measures that are sensitive to victims’ needs and confidentiality and to ensure appropriate criminal sanctions against perpetrators;
13. Welcomes the willingness that has been announced on the part of the Egyptian interim Government, following the recommendation by the Egyptian National Council for Human Rights, to open a regional office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Cairo, and urges the Egyptian interim Government to do the necessary to speed up the opening of this office;
14. Reconfirms its commitment to assisting the Egyptian people in the process of moving towards democratic and economic reform; urges the EU to take into consideration both the principle of conditionality (‘more for more’) and the serious economic challenges faced by Egypt in its bilateral relations with, and its financial support for, the country;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and the interim Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt.