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B7-0147/2014

## 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))

**Véronique De Keyser, Libor Rouček, Pino Arlacchi, Saïd El Khadraoui, Ana Gomes, Richard Howitt, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Maria Eleni Koppa, María Muñiz De Urquiza, Raimon Obiols, Pier Antonio Panzeri, Joanna Senyszyn, Boris Zala**  
on behalf of the S&D Group

**B7-0147/2014**

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

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Egypt, in particular that of 12 September 2013 on the situation in Egypt<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 23 October 2013 on ‘the European Neighbourhood Policy: towards a strengthening of the partnership. Position of the European Parliament on the 2012 reports’<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 23 May 2013 on asset recovery by Arab Spring countries in transition<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to the statements by Vice-President / High Representative Catherine Ashton of 24 January 2014 on the recent violent attacks in Egypt, of 19 January 2014 on the constitutional referendum in Egypt, of 11 January 2014 on the situation in Egypt ahead of the constitutional referendum, of 24 December 2013 on the car bombs in Mansoura, Egypt and of 23 December 2013 on the sentencing of political activists in Egypt,
- 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 Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, to which Egypt is a party,
- having regard to the Constitution of Egypt, approved by the Constitutional Committee on 1 December 2013 and by the referendum of 14 and 15 January 2014,
- having regard to Egyptian Law 107 on the Right to Public Meetings, Processions and Peaceful Demonstrations of 24 November 2013,
- having regard to the constitutional declaration issued in Egypt on 8 July 2013, including a political roadmap for constitutional amendments and parliamentary and presidential elections, and to the programme of the interim government based on this constitutional declaration,
- having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2013)0379.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2013)0446.

<sup>3</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2013)0224.

- A. whereas on 14 and 15 January 2014, Egyptians approved, with a turnout of 38.6 % and by an overwhelming majority of 98.1 % of those who participated in the referendum, the new Constitution of the country;
- B. whereas, in her statement of 19 January 2014, Vice-President / High Representative Catherine Ashton congratulated the Egyptian people and authorities for organising the vote in a largely orderly manner and said that alleged irregularities did not appear to have fundamentally affected the outcome; whereas, according to the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior, 10 people died, many were injured and 444 were arrested in events related to the referendum; whereas various domestic and international actors voiced concerns about procedural irregularities during the vote, the crackdown on those who had been campaigning against the draft constitution, and the one-sided public debate ahead of the referendum;
- C. whereas the new Constitution of Egypt has many positive elements, in the fields of fundamental freedoms and human rights, the protection of minorities, and women's rights in particular, but also includes articles that exempt the armed forces from civilian oversight and their budget from parliamentary scrutiny, and allow military judges to try civilians, while another article restricts the freedom of practising religious rituals and establishing places of worship to the followers of the Abrahamic religions;
- D. whereas political tensions and the deep polarisation of society continue to provoke terrorist attacks and violent clashes in Egypt; whereas since July 2013 more than a thousand people have lost their lives and many more have been injured in clashes between protesters and security forces and between opponents and supporters of former President Morsi; whereas the security forces have reportedly been using excessive force against protesters and thousands have been arrested and detained, while the practice of impunity continues to prevail; whereas on 12 November 2013 the state of emergency was lifted in the country;
- E. whereas the constitutional declaration of 8 July 2013 defined a political roadmap for Egypt; whereas the programme of the interim government affirmed its commitment to working towards building a democratic system which guarantees the rights and freedoms of all Egyptians, and to completing this roadmap with the full participation of all political players and a referendum on the new constitution, to be followed by free and fair parliamentary and presidential elections to be held in due time in accordance with all legislative rules;
- F. whereas violations of fundamental freedoms and human rights remain widespread in Egypt; whereas violence, incitement and harassment against political opponents, journalists and civil society activists further increased in the run-up to the referendum; whereas many political and civil society activists, including Alaa Abdel Fattah, Mohamed Abdel from the Egyptian Centre for Economic and Social Rights, and Ahmed Maher and Ahmed Douma, leaders of the April 6 movement, as well as members of various political parties, were arrested and convicted over the past weeks; whereas on 12 January 2014 the Egyptian National Council for Human Rights released a report after having visited the aforementioned prominent activists in Tora prison, criticising their conditions of detention and calling for an end to their mistreatment;

- G. whereas the Muslim Brotherhood has repeatedly refused to participate in the political process announced by the interim government and called for a boycott of the referendum, while several of its leaders continue inciting to violence against state authorities and security forces; whereas the Egyptian interim authorities have banned the Muslim Brotherhood, imprisoned its leaders, seized its assets, silenced its media, and criminalised its membership, while the movement's Freedom and Justice Party continues to exist; whereas former President Morsi has been detained since 3 July 2013 and faces criminal trials related to his time in office; whereas on 20 December 2013 an international legal team acting for the Freedom and Justice Party submitted a formal complaint to the International Criminal Court on his behalf;
- H. whereas fundamental freedoms and human rights, as well as social justice and a higher standard of living for citizens, are crucial dimensions of the transition towards an open, free, democratic and prosperous Egyptian society; whereas independent trade unions and civil society organisations have a crucial role to play in this process, and free media form a crucial part of society in any democracy; whereas Egyptian women continue to be in a particularly vulnerable situation in the current period of political and social transition in the country;
- I. whereas Law 107 on the Right to Public Meetings, Processions and Peaceful Demonstrations of 24 November 2013 provoked widespread and strong criticism in Egypt and beyond; whereas Vice-President / High Representative Catherine Ashton, in her statement of 23 December 2013, said this law was widely seen as excessively limiting freedom of expression and assembly; whereas peaceful protests were dispersed and many protesters were arrested and detained under this law over the past weeks;
- J. whereas Egypt continues to face serious economic difficulties; whereas economic prosperity in the country requires political stability, sound economic policies, action to fight corruption, and international support;
- K. whereas the security situation has further deteriorated and acts of terrorism and violent attacks against security forces have further intensified in Sinai; whereas, according to official data, at least 95 security personnel have died in violent attacks since 30 June 2013; whereas thousands of people, mainly refugees from Eritrea and Somalia, including many women and children, are losing their lives, are disappearing, or are being kidnapped and held hostage for ransom, tortured, sexually exploited or killed for organ trade by human traffickers in this area;
- L. whereas, in its conclusions of 21 August 2013, the Foreign Affairs Council tasked Vice-President / High Representative Catherine Ashton to review, in cooperation with the Commission, the issue of EU assistance to Egypt under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the EU-Egypt Association Agreement; whereas partnership with societies, an incentive-based approach and the principle of 'more for more', and eventually 'less for less', are cornerstones of the Union's reviewed ENP; whereas Article 2 of the EU-Egypt Association Agreement declares that 'relations between the Parties, as well as the provisions of the Agreement itself, shall be based on respect of democratic principles and fundamental human rights as set out in the Declaration of Human Rights, which guide their internal and international policy and constitutes an

essential element of this Agreement’; whereas in her statement of 11 January 2014 Vice-President / High Representative Catherine Ashton declared that ‘dignity, social justice, security, democracy, human rights, and a better economy remain the goals the EU stands by Egypt to achieve’;

1. Expresses once more its solidarity with the Egyptian people and continues to support their legitimate democratic aspirations; takes note of the new Constitution of Egypt, approved by the referendum held on 14 and 15 January 2014, which may be an important step forward in the country’s troubled transition to democracy; calls for full and effective implementation of the provisions on fundamental freedoms – including the freedoms of assembly, association and expression – and human rights in the new Constitution, as well as for all existing and future legislation in these fields to be in compliance with it;
2. Expresses, however, its concern over certain articles in the new Constitution, with special regard to those related to the status of the armed forces, including the following: Article 202, which declares that the Minister of Defence, who is also the Commander-in-Chief, shall be appointed from among the armed forces’ officers; Article 203 on the budget of the armed forces; Article 204 allowing the trial of civilians by military judges in case of crimes of direct assaults against military installations, military zones, military equipment, military documents and secrets, public funds of the armed forces, military factories, and military personnel, as well as in case of crimes pertaining to military service; and Article 234 declaring that the Minister of Defence shall be appointed upon the approval of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, which provision shall remain in force for two full presidential terms, with no indication on how and by whom the minister can be removed from office;
3. Takes note of the overwhelming majority support for the new constitution among those who participated in the referendum, and of the relatively low turnout and the reports of alleged irregularities during the vote; strongly regrets the violent clashes before, during and after the referendum, which lead to deaths and injuries, as well as the crackdown against activists who campaigned against the draft constitution, which resulted in a one-sided public debate preceding the vote;
4. Is deeply concerned at the continued violent clashes in Egypt, the polarisation of and deep internal divisions within Egyptian society, and the lack of an enabling environment for democratic and pluralistic public debate in the country; strongly condemns all acts of terrorism, violence, incitement to violence and hate speech, and extends its condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives in violent clashes;
5. Condemns any act of disproportionate use of force by security forces against demonstrators, and urges the Egyptian interim government to ensure that there are prompt, independent, serious and impartial investigations in all such cases and that those responsible be held accountable; reminds the interim government of its responsibility to ensure the security of all Egyptian citizens, regardless of their political views or religious affiliation, as well as the non-partisan accountability of those responsible for violence, incitement to violence, or human rights violations;

6. Stresses once more that reconciliation and a civilian-led inclusive political process, with the participation of all democratic political actors, are crucial elements of the democratic transition in Egypt, and that holding free and fair parliamentary and presidential elections within the timeframe defined by the new Constitution – leading to adequate representation of different political views and of women and minority communities – is another crucial step in this process; encourages all political and social actors, including the supporters of former President Morsi, to avoid any act of violence, incitement to violence, or provocation, and to contribute to reconciliation efforts; reiterates its call for the release of all political prisoners, including former President Morsi; continues to believe that any ban, exclusion or prosecution directed against a democratic political force or actor in Egypt repeats past mistakes and only leads to increased radicalism;
7. Calls for an immediate end to all acts of violence, harassment or intimidation – by state authorities, security forces or other groups – against political opponents, peaceful protesters, trade union representatives, journalists, women’s rights activists, and other civil society actors in Egypt; calls for serious and impartial investigations in such cases and for those responsible to be brought to justice; calls once more on the interim government to guarantee that domestic and international civil society organisations, independent trade unions and journalists can operate freely, without government interference, in the country;
8. Expresses its concern over Law 107 on the Right to Public Meetings, Processions and Peaceful Demonstrations of 24 November 2013, which places arbitrary limitations on the right of peaceful assembly and allows repression, as well as its implementation, including recent arrests under it; calls for the revision of this law in line with international standards and Egypt’s international obligations, through dialogue with civil society, and for the release of all those who have been arrested, detained and convicted solely for exercising their legitimate rights of freedom of assembly, protest, or freedom of association or expression;
9. Condemns the recent terrorist attacks against security forces in Egypt; is deeply concerned about the further deterioration of the security situation in Sinai, and calls for intensified efforts by the Egyptian interim government and security forces to restore security, in particular by fighting human traffickers, in this area; recalls, in this context, that Article 89 of the new Constitution declares that all forms of slavery, oppression, forced exploitation of human beings, sex trade, and other forms of human trafficking are prohibited and criminalised by law in Egypt;
10. Reiterates its call on the Council, the VP/HR and the Commission to take into consideration both the principle of conditionality (‘more for more’) and the serious economic and social challenges Egypt is facing in the Union’s bilateral relations with, and its financial support to the country, as well as its call for clear and jointly agreed benchmarks in this regard;
11. Reiterates its call for strengthening the EU’s support and assistance to Egypt, and other Arab Spring countries, in the process of asset recovery, as mentioned in its resolutions of 23 May 2013 and 12 September 2013; stresses again that facilitating the return of

assets stolen by former dictators and their regimes is a moral imperative for the EU and is a highly political issue, by reason of its symbolic value, in the Union's relations with its southern neighbourhood;

12. 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 Policy, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, and the interim government of the Arab Republic of Egypt.