



Plenary sitting

B9-0233/2024

23.4.2024

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on the proposed repeal of the law banning female genital mutilation in The Gambia
(2024/2699(RSP))

Pedro Marques, Hannes Heide
on behalf of the S&D Group

B9-0233/2024

Motion for a European Parliament resolution on the proposed repeal of the law banning female genital mutilation in The Gambia (2024/2699(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 12 February 2020 on an EU strategy to put an end to female genital mutilation around the world,
 - having regard to the Samoa Agreement,
 - having regard to the Maputo Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa,
 - having regard to Rule 144 of its rules of procedure,
- A. whereas female genital mutilation (FGM) is a violation of human rights which amounts to child abuse and gender-based violence;
- B. whereas around 46% of girls aged 14 and under are victims of FGM in The Gambia; whereas FGM has severe consequences including irreparable physical, psychological, reproductive and sexual health damage, and can lead to death;
- C. whereas the Women's Amendment Act which criminalised the practice of FGM was adopted in The Gambia in 2015; whereas this legislation was recognised globally as a leading step forward;
- D. whereas a bill has been introduced to parliament to repeal the Act and decriminalise FGM; whereas The Gambia risks being the first country to backtrack on progress in tackling FGM;
- E. whereas The Gambia is a signatory to multiple regional and international agreements which commit parties to eliminating FGM, most recently through its signature of the Samoa Agreement;
- F. whereas the decriminalisation of FGM in The Gambia would not only be a devastating step backwards in the country, but would risk encouraging similar weakening of the rights of women and girls in the region;
- G. whereas an estimated 71% of female EU asylum applications from FGM-practicing countries are FGM survivors;

1. Deeply regrets the proposed repeal of the FGM ban in The Gambia; stresses this would be an unequivocal step backwards for the rights of women and girls, and the decriminalisation of an invasive form of gender-based violence;
2. Urges the Gambian parliament to immediately reject the proposal and uphold the criminalisation of FGM;
3. Calls on the Gambian government to engage with international partners on the way forward, notably the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM;
4. Underlines that the rights of women and girls remains fragile; reiterates the importance of continued awareness-raising and community engagement in The Gambia to tackle FGM, including with religious, traditional and community leaders;
5. Recalls that community engagement requires the full involvement of boys and men through national dialogue and education to support inclusive and positive societal change;
6. Calls on the Commission and EEAS to urgently address the issue of FGM with the Gambian authorities in political and human rights dialogue, including psychological support for FGM victims;
7. Urges the Commission and Member States to further coordinate adequate protection for female asylum seekers on the grounds of FGM, including guidance based on the UNHCR Guidelines on gender-based persecution, and training of asylum case workers;
8. Instruct its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and the Government and Parliament of The Gambia.