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Plenary sitting

<NoDocSe>B8‑0196/2017</NoDocSe>

<Date>{14/03/2017}14.3.2017</Date>

<TitreType>MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION</TitreType>

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

<TitreRecueil>pursuant to Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure</TitreRecueil>

<Titre>on Zimbabwe, case of Pastor Evan Mawarire</Titre>

<DocRef>(2017/2608(RSP))</DocRef>

<RepeatBlock-By><Depute>Lola Sánchez Caldentey, Tania González Peñas, Xabier Benito Ziluaga, Estefanía Torres Martínez, Miguel Urbán Crespo, Merja Kyllönen, Neoklis Sylikiotis, Takis Hadjigeorgiou, Barbara Spinelli, Javier Couso Permuy, Dimitrios Papadimoulis, Kostadinka Kuneva, Stelios Kouloglou</Depute>

<Commission>{GUE}on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group</Commission>

</RepeatBlock-By>

B8‑0196/2017

European Parliament resolution on Zimbabwe, case of Pastor Evan Mawarire

(2017/2608(RSP))

*The European Parliament*,

– having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of December 1948,

– having regard to the Charter of the United Nations of 1945 and in particular Article 1 (2) on “the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples”,

– having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights of June 1981, which Zimbabwe has ratified,

– having regard to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ratified by Zimbabwe in May 1991,

– having regard to the most recent local EU statement on Zimbabwe,

– having regard to its previous resolutions on Zimbabwe,

– having regard to Rules 135(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

1. whereas since May 2016 thousands of demonstrators – informal traders, unemployed young people and, now, professional people – have taken to the streets in a number of urban centres across Zimbabwe to hold the government to account for increasing corruption, unemployment, poverty and inequality;
2. whereas the protest movement led by clergyman Evan Mawarire, using the hashtag #ThisFlag, has drawn support from churches and the middle class, which had hitherto tended to steer clear of street politics; whereas on 6 July 2016 the opposition movement #ThisFlag called for a national ‘stay-away’ day in protest against the government’s inaction against corruption, impunity and poverty; whereas this resulted in a massive shutdown of most shops and businesses in the capital and led to a severe crackdown by the authorities;
3. whereas in the face of this increasing activism and human rights defenders mobilization, the authorities intensified the crackdown on government critics, imposing blanket bans on protest in central Harare and arbitrary detaining journalists and activists, some of whom have been tortured;
4. whereas Evan Mawarire, who left the country last year in fear for his life, was arrested this as he landed in Zimbabwe after six months in exile;
5. whereas the deep economic and social crisis which the country has been experiencing for years and which has lately intensified; Whereas the unemployment rate is estimated by international organizations to be close to 80% (excluding the informal sector), whereas the share of the population living below the poverty line is now estimated at over 80%; Whereas repayment of debt and debt interest covers 80% of the country's GDP; Whereas 70% of Zimbabwe's external debt is held by 'public' players such as the World Bank, the IMF and some third states; Whereas hyperinflation has ruined the country and continues to have consequences on the price of foodstuffs and to generate chronic food shortages;
6. whereas the National Indicative Programme (NIP) for Zimbabwe has been allocated EUR 234 million for the period 2014-2020 under the 11th European Development Fund, to be focused on three main sectors, namely health, agriculture-based economic development, and governance and institution building;
7. Condemns the violence of the repression of peaceful demonstrations, condemns all intimidation, harassment, arbitrary arrests and violence against human rights activists, the opposition, NGOs and journalists; Stresses the need for independence and impartiality of justice;
8. Calls on the Zimbabwean authorities to release all political prisoners immediately and unconditionally;
9. Stresses that Zimbabwe must respect and implement international human rights conventions, including the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1998;
10. Expresses particular concern over the economic and social situation in Zimbabwe, recalls that the country's main problem is poverty, unemployment and chronic undernourishment; considers that many problems the Zimbabwean people are facing are linked with the sequels of the segregation regime of Rhodesia; considers that these problems can only be solved through the implementation of ambitious public policies on employment, education, health and agriculture;
11. Stresses the fact that Zimbabwe is one of the most indebted country in the world; Call for a human needs-based approach to debt sustainability through a binding set of standards to define responsible lending and borrowing, debt audits and fair debt workout mechanism, which should assess the legitimacy and the sustainability of countries' debt burdens and possible cancellation of unsustainable an unjust debt; Welcomes, in this regard, UN´s work towards an international sovereign debt workout mechanisms and calls on international public actors and in particular the creditor countries with regard to Zimbabwe to eliminate the obstacles to development by canceling the debts they have in the country;
12. Expresses particular concern about the situation of women in the country; Urges the authorities to take all necessary measures to ensure the effective implementation of laws that penalize domestic violence, sexual assault and prohibit traditional discriminatory practices; Stresses the need to review the legal regimes of written and customary law so that they are in conformity with the CEDAW and the Maputo Protocol;
13. Strongly condemns the obstruction of food aid for political gain; insists that the EU must ensure that the funding allocated to Zimbabwe for its National Indicative Programme effectively addresses the sectors concerned and the most needed;
14. Stresses that it is important for the EU to start up a political dialogue with the Zimbabwean authorities thereby confirming the EU’s commitment to supporting the local population;
15. Reject all external operations, destabilization strategies and external interference in the internal affairs of Zimbabwe; considers that it is up to the Zimbabwean people to decide their present and future free from any external interference; underlines that there is a need for solidarity based on the principles of national sovereignty and independence, territorial integrity, peace, rights, social progress, friendship and cooperation;
16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the European External Action Service, the Government and Parliament of Zimbabwe, the governments of the Southern African Development Community, the African Union, the Pan-African Parliament, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth.