

Thursday 5 April 2001

19. Human rights: Violence towards Catholic nuns

B5-0261, 0272, 0280 and 0298/2001

European Parliament resolution on sexual violence against women, particularly Catholic nuns

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights,
 - having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
 - having regard to its resolution of 16 September 1997 on the need to establish a EU campaign for zero tolerance of violence against women ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 10 March 1999 on violence against women ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women,
- A. having regard to the strong condemnation by itself and by the other Community institutions of all forms of violence against women, particularly sexual abuse,
- B. extremely concerned about the substance of a report which appeared in the American periodical the National Catholic Reporter, according to which a large number of Catholic nuns have been raped by priests in at least 23 countries,
- C. whereas the Holy See has confirmed that it was aware of cases of rape and sexual abuse of women, including nuns, by Catholic priests, notably because, since 1994, at least five reports on this subject have been submitted to the Vatican,
- D. whereas, although the officials responsible were well informed about these human rights violations, they did not take any proper action in response,
- E. whereas according to these reports several of the nuns who had been raped were also compelled to have abortions or to resign, or in some cases were contaminated with HIV/AIDS,
- F. whereas according to the spokesman for the Vatican, Joaquín Navarro Valls, the Vatican is aware of the problem but it is geographically limited and whereas, on the contrary, this phenomenon is not confined to Africa,
- G. whereas sexual abuse is a crime against the human person and whereas those who have committed these crimes must be brought to justice,
1. Condemns all violations of women's rights and acts of sexual violence, particularly against Catholic nuns; expresses its solidarity with the victims;
 2. Calls for those responsible for these crimes to be arrested and brought to justice; calls on the judicial authorities of the 23 countries cited in the reports to ensure that all appropriate judicial action is taken to establish the truth about these cases of violence against women;
 3. Calls on the Holy See to take all allegations of sexual abuse within its organisations seriously, to cooperate with the judicial authorities and to remove the perpetrators from office;
 4. Calls on the Holy See to reinstate those female officials who have been removed from their posts for drawing their supervisors' attention to these abuses and afford the victims the necessary protection from and compensation for any discrimination which might ensue;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 304, 6.10.1997, p. 55.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 175, 21.6.1999, p. 133.

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5. Calls for the content of the five reports cited by the National Catholic Reporter to be published in full;
6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the authorities of the Holy See, the Council of Europe, the United Nations Human Rights Commission and the Governments of Botswana, Burundi, Brazil, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, India, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Nigeria, Papua-New Guinea, the Philippines, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Tanzania, Tonga, the United States of America, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

20. Human rights: Pakistan

B5-0265, 0273, 0281, 0288 and 0299/2001

European Parliament resolution on the human rights in Pakistan

The European Parliament,

- A. whereas since the October 1999 coup General Pervez Musharraf has moved Pakistan further away from the rule of law and respect for human rights,
 - B. whereas on 23 March 2001, Pakistan's National Day, many civil rights activists were arrested, among them Nawadzada Nasrullah Khan, leader of the Alliance for the Revival of Democracy, placed under house arrest, or prohibited from taking part in rallies aimed at protesting against restrictions on political and civic activities,
 - C. whereas the total number of arrests is unknown, but may well be above 1000, mainly in Lahore,
 - D. whereas many detainees appear not to be held on any formal grounds and most are detained under provisions of the Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance,
 - E. whereas these arrests took place just before the second series of local elections, in which political parties are not being allowed to participate,
 - F. whereas this is the largest wave of arrests by the military authorities directed against the political parties since the military took power in 1999,
 - G. whereas this action is aimed at repressing democratic aspirations and preventing the political parties from carrying out their legitimate activity,
 - H. whereas this action casts doubt on the genuineness of the military regime's professed intention of restoring democracy,
 - I. whereas the Pakistan Supreme Court has ordered the government to hold a general election no later than October 2002,
 - J. whereas in his Pakistan Day message General Musharraf called for solidarity and unity and declared that 'a social order free from exploitation, discrimination and injustice cannot be established without the active support of the people',
 - K. whereas on 20 March 2001 the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group expressed 'concern over the harassment of political parties, including the restrictions imposed on democratic activities, processes and institutions and the detention of persons without due process of law' and repeated the view that 'there was no justification for delaying parliamentary elections',
1. Condemns the arbitrary arrests of political leaders and activists;
 2. Urges the Pakistani authorities to release all the detainees immediately;