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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

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

pursuant to Rule 115 of the Rules of Procedure

by Pasqualina Naipoletano, Ana Maria Gomes, Marie-Arlette Carlotti

on behalf of the PSE Group

on the situation in Ethiopia

European Parliament resolution on the situation in Ethiopia

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on post election crisis and the serious human rights violations, in particular that of 7 July 2005 on the human rights situation, of 13 October 2005 on the situation in Ethiopia, of 15 December 2005 on the situation in Ethiopia and the new border conflict and of 15 November 2006 on Ethiopia,
- having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on the 11 June 2007 an Ethiopian court found 38 senior opposition figures guilty of charges related to mass protests after disputed elections two years ago and ranging from 'outrage against the constitution' to aggravated high treason,
- B. whereas sentencing is expected next month and most accused could face death penalties,
- C. whereas the verdicts were announced to surprise in the courtroom and new verdicts expected on June 18 have been adjourned to July in the cases of an additional 12 accused who were represented in court by lawyers,
- D. whereas among those found guilty are Hailu Shawel, President of the Coalition for Unity and Democracy, Professor Mesfin Woldemariam, former Chair of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council, Dr Yacob Hailemariam, UN Special Envoy and former Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, Dr. Berhanu Nega, Mayor-elect of Addis Ababa and Ms Birtukan Mideksa, former judge, all declared 'prisoners of conscience' by Amnesty International,
- E. whereas the now convicted 38 prisoners, who all refused to admit any guilt, were among the estimated 30.000 people arrested in a government crackdown on demonstrators complaining of fraud and vote-rigging by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's government in the 2005 polls,
- F. whereas two months ago a judge threw out controversial charges of attempted genocide and treason against 111 people arrested after the election protests,
- G. whereas the Commission of Inquiry that the Ethiopian Parliament established at the end of November 2005 to investigate the violence of June and November 2005 concluded that 193 civilians were killed and 763 injured by government security forces; the report of the commission found that some of the victims were killed with a single bullet wound to the head and sharpshooters targeted certain opposition leaders; according to the same report protesters were unarmed and the security forces used of excessive force,
- H. whereas the report also states that a 14-year-old boy was killed during demonstrations and his brother, who ran out to help him, was shot from behind and that Etenesh Yimam, the wife of an opposition candidate was gunned down outside her house and in front of her children,

- I. whereas the opposition Coalition for Unity and Democracy blamed the deaths on the security forces but Mr Meles accused the opposition of starting the violent protests,
 - J. whereas the president and vice-president of the Inquiry Commission were forced to flee, following pressure by the government to reverse the Commission's findings and whereas a testimony on these events was given by the vice-president of the Inquiry Commission Woldemichael to the European Parliament, during a hearing held on 5 June 2007,
 - K. whereas Dr. Muluallem Tarekegne, former elected member of the Ethiopian Parliament and currently exiled in Sweden, testified to the European Parliament, during the same hearing, on the continued pressure that elected members of parliament are subject to in Ethiopia,
 - L. whereas journalists keep being arrested and prevented from exercising their profession,
 - M. whereas in January 2007 police forces have allegedly beaten and severely injured students in the towns of Dembi Dollo and Ghimbi, causing the death of three of them and detaining between 30 and 50 students,
 - N. whereas individuals accused of international terrorism, including EU citizens, have been arbitrarily detained and 'rendered',
 - O. whereas the political and democratic stability in Ethiopia is crucial for the development of the countries of the Horn of Africa,
 - P. whereas Ethiopia is a signatory to the Cotonou Agreement whose article 96 stipulates that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is an essential element of ACP-EU cooperation,
 - Q. whereas Members of the United Nations Security Council will meet on the 16 June 2007, in Addis Ababa with African Union (AU) and Ethiopian officials, as well as with the AU Peace and Security Council,
1. Calls on the Ethiopian government to immediately and unconditionally release all political prisoners, including elected members of parliament, CUD leaders, human rights activists, journalists, teachers, students, trade union activists and ordinary citizens;
 2. Strongly condemns the recent decision by an Ethiopian court to find guilty 38 opposition leaders, human rights activists and journalists, without defence proceedings, in a judicial process that does not respect international standards for free and fair trials and which has been widely condemned by international human rights organisations;
 3. Urges the Ethiopian judicial authorities to reconsider their verdict and calls on the Ethiopian Government to repeal possible death and/or prison sentences and to guarantee the independence of the judicial system;
 4. Welcomes the release of 28 defendants on 10 April 2007, including seven journalists, one of whom, Serkalem Fasil, was six months pregnant when arrested and was denied adequate medical care;
 5. Calls for the establishment of an international independent Inquiry Commission and urges

the Ethiopian government to allow it to independently pursue the original findings of the Commission and give it unlimited access to the sources and documents that are relevant for the investigation;

6. Condemns the Ethiopian government for arresting independent journalists and for impeding freedom of press;
7. Urges the Ethiopian Government to promptly investigate the incidents regarding students of Dembi Dollo and Ghimbi and to held accountable those responsible;
8. Asks the Ethiopian Government to disclose the total number of persons detained and to allow all detainees access to their families, legal counsel and medical care;
9. Condemns the arbitrary detention and renditions of individuals accused of international terrorism, including EU nationals, and calls on the Ethiopian government to immediately disclose information about these "renditions";
10. Expresses concerns over the Ethiopian intervention in Somalia and its implications on peace and stability throughout the Horn of Africa region;
11. Calls on the Ethiopian regime to respect Human rights, the rule of law and democratic freedom, including the right to assembly and freedom of expression, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Union Charter of Human and People's Rights;
12. Urges the Ethiopian government to engage in a serious dialogue with the opposition and civil society, aimed at national reconciliation, allowing for a real democratisation process to take place;
13. Calls on the Commission and the Council to make a clear request for the Ethiopian government to immediately release all political prisoners without condition;
14. Requests the Commission and the Council to share with the European Parliament the reports produced by those who, on behalf of the Commission and Council, have been observing the current trials, including the British Michael Ellman and others;
15. Calls on the Commission and the Council to strongly condemn the Ethiopian government for the brutal repression that followed the May 2005 elections and for the serious breaches of human rights and democracy perpetrated by the authorities ever since and to monitor the situation in Ethiopia;
16. Calls on the European Council to apply targeted sanctions to senior government and EPRDF officials;
17. Calls on the Commission and the Council to take a coordinated stance consistent with article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement; the development cooperation programmes under the Cotonou agreement should depend on respect for human rights and good governance;
18. Calls on the Commission and the Council to explore ways and means to organise an all-inclusive inter-Ethiopian dialogue with the participation of political parties and civil society in order to work out a lasting solution to the current political crisis;
19. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support, through cooperation

instruments, the development of free media broadcasting in Ethiopia;

20. Calls on the Commission to establish a support fund for victims of human rights atrocities and relatives of political prisoners;
21. Calls on the UN to appoint a 'special Rapporteur' to conduct an investigation in Ethiopia on judicial independence and arbitrary detentions;
22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the African Union Commission and the Pan-African Parliament, the Ethiopian Government, the main political parties in Ethiopia and the Secretary General of the United Nations;