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Zimbabwe, notably the case of Itai Dzamara

Greens/EFA motion for resolution

Tabled by Judith Sargentini, Maria Heubuch, Heidi Hautala, Barbara Lochbihler, Ernest Urtasun, Bodil Ceballos, Igor Šoltes on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Zimbabwe,
- having regard to the revised Partnership Agreement between the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States and the European Community signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000 (the Cotonou Agreement),
- having regard to the Universal declaration on Human Rights,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
- having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights,
- having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. Whereas Itai Dzamara is a Zimbabwean political activist, publisher, founder of Trinity Media and leader of the Occupy Africa Unity Square Movement;

B. Whereas Itai Dzamara is a vocal critic of Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe;

C. Whereas Itai Dzamara has been abducted on March 9, allegedly by State security forces, and has not reappeared since then;

D. Whereas before his abduction, on several occasions, police and supporters of the ruling ZANU-PF party assaulted Dzamara, e.g. during a peaceful protest in November, during which 20 police officers beat him to unconsciousness;

E. Whereas on March 11, the Occupy Africa Unity Square Movement, along with the MDC (Movement

for Democratic Change) led by Morgan Tsvangirai, marched to the Zimbabwean parliament and demanded the release of Itai Dzamara;

F. Whereas this march led to clashes with police forces;

G. Whereas the same evening, the police attacked Harvest House, the MDC headquarters;

H. Whereas on April 27, 11 people were detained in Harare, after they took part in a procession in support of missing Itai Dzamara;

I. Whereas a High Court Order directed the government to search for Dzamara and report progress to the Court every two weeks until his whereabouts are determined;

J. Whereas there is no indication that the government is respecting this Order;

K. Whereas Itai Dzamara's wife, Sheffra Dzamara, reported in early April that unidentified men were keeping her under constant surveillance and that she feared for her life;

L. Whereas Zimbabwe is signatory of the Cotonou agreement whereby respect for human rights is an essential element of the EU and ACP cooperation;

M. Whereas Zimbabwe has a long history of intimidation, arbitrary arrests and judicial harassment of human rights activists;

N. Whereas the EU's appropriate measures directed against Zimbabwe under article 96 Cotonou Agreement have expired;

1. Expresses its serious concern about the fate of Itai Dzamara;

2. Urges his abductors to release him immediately;

3. Is seriously concerned by the seemingly lack of interest of Zimbabwean authorities in conducting a serious investigation on the abduction of Itai Dzamara and calls upon the authorities to take immediate action;

4. In particular, calls on Zimbabwean authorities to immediately comply with the order of the Zimbabwe High Court which instructed the home affairs minister, the police commissioner-general, and the director-general of the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) "to do all things necessary to determine his [Dzamara's] whereabouts." This should include advertising on all state media and working closely with lawyers appointed by Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights to search for Dzamara "at all such places as may be within their jurisdiction," as ordered by the Court;

5. Calls on Zimbabwean authorities to immediately comply with the order of the Zimbabwean High Court to report to the judge every two weeks on the government's progress on the case until Dzamara is found;

6. Calls on Zimbabwean authorities to ensure the safety and security of Sheffra Dzamara, wife of Itai Dzamara, and her children;

7. Invites the EU delegation and Member States embassies in Harare to remain actively seized of the matter;

8. Denounces all human rights violations in general, and in particular those that harm the political opposition, the media and civil society by restricting freedom of expression and of association;
9. Recalls that Zimbabwe is bound by the human rights clause of the Cotonou Agreement and by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and therefore has an obligation to respect universal human rights, including freedom of expression;
10. Calls on Zimbabwe to abide by the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1998, and in particular Article 1 thereof, which states that ‘everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels’;
11. Urges the Government of Zimbabwe to guarantee the safety of human rights defenders and create an enabling environment for all people to enjoy their right to freedom of expression, association and assembly;
12. Urges the authorities of Zimbabwe to release all human rights defenders detained for exercising human rights activities, to end judicial harassment and to investigate fully abuses faced by human rights defenders;
13. Acknowledges the establishment of the Zimbabwean Human Rights Commission but is concerned that it has not been given any significant capacity with which to act independently and fulfil its objectives with regard to the pressing human rights issues facing the country;
14. Urges the Zimbabwean government to stop resorting to legislation that repress and restricts all fundamental freedoms as well as encouraging and condoning serious violations of the rights of human rights defenders, including arbitrary arrests or acts of torture;
15. Calls on the HR/VP, in light of the evolution of the human rights’ situation in Zimbabwe, to critically assess the expiration of appropriate measures under article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement;
16. Instructs its President to forward this Resolution to the Council, the European Commission, the VP/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EEAS, the government and the Parliament of Zimbabwe.

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