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TEXTS ADOPTED

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**P9\_TA(2023)0116**

**The risk of death penalty and execution of singer Yahaya Sharif Aminu for blasphemy in Nigeria**

**European Parliament resolution of 20 April 2023 on the risk of the death penalty and the execution of singer Yahaya Sharif-Aminu for blasphemy in Nigeria (2023/2650(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Rules 144(5) and 132(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on 10 August 2020, Nigerian singer Yahaya Sharif-Aminu was brought before an upper Sharia court in Kano State, where he was tried without legal representation and sentenced to death by hanging for alleged blasphemy in a song he composed and shared on social media containing allegedly derogatory comments regarding the Prophet Muhammad;
- B. whereas on 21 January 2021, Kano State High Court ordered a retrial on the grounds of procedural irregularities and on 17 August 2022 the Court of Appeal upheld the constitutionality of the blasphemy provisions in the Sharia Penal Code and affirmed the retrial order;
- C. whereas in November 2022, Yahaya Sharif-Aminu filed an appeal with the Supreme Court against his conviction, arguing that the blasphemy law under Kano State's Sharia Penal Code directly violates Nigeria's Constitution and binding international human rights treaties; whereas he remains in prison;
- D. whereas many other people have been harmed by Nigeria's blasphemy laws; whereas student Deborah Yakubu was stoned and beaten to death in 2022; whereas Rhoda Jatau was attacked by a mob and is on trial without the right to bail; whereas humanist Mubarak Bala was sentenced to 24 years in prison;
- E. whereas the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Nigeria is party, restricts capital punishment to the most serious crimes; whereas despite this, Sharia, practiced in at least 12 states in northern Nigeria, imposes the death penalty for blasphemy;
- F. whereas blasphemy laws in Nigeria are in violation of its international human rights commitments, the African Charter and the Nigerian Constitution;

1. Urges the Nigerian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Yahaya Sharif-Aminu, drop all charges against him and guarantee his due process rights; calls for the release of Rhoda Jatau, Mubarak Bala and others who face blasphemy allegations;
2. Recalls that blasphemy laws are in clear breach of international human rights obligations, in particular the ICCPR, and contrary to the Nigerian Constitution, which guarantees religious freedom and freedom of expression;
3. Urges the Nigerian authorities to uphold human rights throughout the country by ensuring that federal, state and Sharia law do not deny Nigerians protection under the national Constitution and international conventions; urges the Nigerian authorities to repeal the blasphemy laws at federal and state level;
4. Recalls that Nigeria has immense influence throughout Africa and the Muslim world and stresses that this case is an unprecedented opportunity to lead the way towards abolishing blasphemy laws;
5. Urges the Nigerian Government to tackle the impunity surrounding blasphemy accusations;
6. Recalls the international efforts to abolish the death penalty and urges Nigeria to immediately withdraw the use of capital punishment for blasphemy and take steps towards full abolition;
7. Calls for the EU and its Member States, as key development partners, to raise individual cases, human rights concerns and blasphemy laws with the Nigerian authorities;
8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Nigerian authorities and international institutions.