

Notice: Undefined index: et_header_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

Notice: Undefined index: et_header_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1215

Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1215

Notice: Undefined index: et_template in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1216

PAKISTAN: EU urged to act over ‘continued rights abuses’ by Pakistan

EU urged to act over ‘continued rights abuses’ by Pakistan

Eureporter.co (17.09.2021) – <https://bit.ly/3tTAG2h> – Coalition spokesman Andy Vermaut :

The EU institutions have been urged to act urgently in the case of Pakistan’s alleged continued human rights abuses. A coalition of respected human rights NGOs, coming together under the umbrella of Human Rights Without Frontiers

(HRWF), delivered a letter to the EU's High Representative Josep Borrell, calling for the suspension of Pakistan's GSP+ status, which gives the country preferential trading rights with the EU, on the basis of "continued human rights abuses" .

In the letter, delivered by hand to the Brussels offices of Borrell, a former Spanish MEP, on Wednesday, the NGOs particularly highlighted the abuses of Pakistan's blasphemy laws. This has recently seen an eight year old child charged with blasphemy "against the prophet" an offence carrying a mandatory death sentence. The letter follows a recent conference on the matter, also hosted by the Press Club in Brussels, which was addressed by former European Commissioner Jan Figel, MEP Peter van Dalen and others.

A UK parliamentary group has since declared its support for the campaign, headed by HRWF. One of the organisers of the letter told this site that there is particular concern about Pakistan's current country's blasphemy laws, and the lack of respect for the presumption of innocence. The letter handed to Borrell, the EU's foreign affairs chief, cites article 12 of a European parliament Joint Motion For A Resolution, dated April 28 and passed by 681 votes. This pledges "to immediately review Pakistan's eligibility for GSP+ status in the light of current events and whether there is sufficient reason to initiate a procedure for the temporary withdrawal of this status and the benefits that come with it, and to report to the European Parliament on this matter as soon as possible".

The recent conference heard that of the benefits given as a result of the current agreement with Pakistan, around 20% only accrued to the EU, causing, in the opinion of the conference, no significant potential detrimental economic impact on the EU or the member states. The imposition of the mandatory death

sentence for those found guilty of blasphemy against the prophet, particularly in the context of such charges having recently been levelled at an eight year old child, makes, in the opinion of the conference, the current GSP+ status enjoyed by Pakistan “morally and politically untenable.”

During the conference, the names were read out of 47 prisoners who are currently held on blasphemy charges in Pakistan. They are: Mubashir Ahmed; Gulab Ahmed; Ahtesham Ahmed; Zahid Ahmed; Ahmed Waqar; Anwar; Islam; Mailik Ashraf; Anwar Ashgar; Ahmed Ashgar; Noor Ashgar; Malik Ashraf; Kausar Ayub; Amud Ayub; Taimur; Siya; Raza; Zafar Bati; Md. Safi; Md. Shehzad; Rehmat Ali; Asif; Md. Aslam; Arif Mehdi; Junaid; Hafeez; Abdul Hamid; Md. Faruq; Hayai Bin; Malik; Md. Humayan Faysal; Aftab Mastargil; Nadeem James; Arif Massih; Saudi Issaq; Abdul Karim; Imran Massih; Yakub; Ishfaq Massih; Saba Massih; Bashir; Mastan Mushtaq; Shamsuddin; Md. Yussaf; Inayat Rasool; Iqbal and Md. Aslam.

The list comprises Ahmediyyas, Shias, Hindus, and Christians. Sixteen of these have been handed a death sentence. The letter sent to Borrell on Wednesday states that “Accordingly, we wish to ask the High Representative – who has previously stated that suspension of Pakistan’s GSP+ status is a measure of last measures – what his current position is in this regard?” The letter, seen by this site, goes on to say that “given that Pakistan’s behaviour clearly contravenes the requirement for GSP+ beneficiaries to ratify 27 international conventions, numerous it is clearly in breach of, we respectfully ask how the High Representative can justify the continuation of Pakistan’s GSP+ status?” No one from the EEAS was immediately available for comment to this website on Wednesday (15 September).

Photo: Andy Vermaut – eureporter.co

Further reading about FORB in Pakistan on HRWF website

Notice: Undefined index: et_footer_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1267

Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1267

Notice: Undefined index: et_footer_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1268

Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1268

Notice: Undefined index: et_template in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1269