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## **MEP calls for humanitarian sense in Libya case**

MEP Simon Busuttill called for humanitarian sense to prevail to resolve the case of five Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor sentenced to death in Libya.

Dr Busuttill was addressing the European Parliament plenary session meeting in Strasbourg today (Wednesday 17, January) which was debating a motion for resolution on the recent conviction to death by firing squad of six medics accused of having injected hundreds of Libyan children with HIV virus in a Benghazi hospital.

Dr Busuttill warned that this case was sensitive and very emotional since there were victims on both sides.

The victims included hundreds of Libyan children infected with aids, many of whom had already succumbed to the disease. This had a devastating effect on the children and their families.

But he added that the victims also included the six medics who had already spent seven years in prison and were now convicted to death despite compelling scientific evidence by internationally renowned experts attesting their innocence.

Dr Busuttill said that the recent conviction to death in a re-trial had escalated matters and measures needed to be taken to defuse the situation.

"We need a good dose of humanitarian sense to resolve this issue", he said.

He said that the European Union has already expressed solidarity through the HIV Action Plan for Benghazi and the setting up of the Benghazi International Fund to assist the children and their families as well as the Libyan health authorities. However, he said that more should be done to continue to express Europe's solidarity with the children and their families.

At the same time, he said, the European Parliament was clearly pronouncing itself against the death penalty. This had to be clear.

Dr Busuttill appealed to the Libyan authorities to defuse the tension by pronouncing themselves in the sense that, whatever the outcome of this case, the death penalty would not be applied.

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