



Statement by Bürgerbewegung Pax Europa

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Session 8 Freedom of Assembly and Association

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Losing The Right to Walk The Streets of London

BPE welcomes the statement from the EU as delivered by the United Kingdom.

Freedom of Assembly is a fundamental right enjoyed and exercised by individuals and groups, among others. This freedom is guaranteed in order to protest, again, among other reasons.

In June of this year, Tommy Robinson and Kevin Carroll, both of the English Defence League, were arrested for attempting to walk to Woolwich, where Drummer Lee Rigby was hacked to death by a Muslim shouting "Allahu Akbar".

Both Robinson and Carroll wanted to march to Woolwich to lay a wreath in commemoration of Rigby's death and raise money for a cancer-stricken girl. The police put severe restrictions on the march, banning the two men from walking past a large mosque in East London and the borough of Tower Hamlets. In addition, a man was allowed to step forward and assault both Robinson and Carroll despite police presence. Later, they were arrested by a senior police officer on the pretext of obstructing the police.

Let me remind you that all the two men did was march while wearing t-shirts bearing the words "Support our troops".

Ladies and gentlemen, this was a charity walk. By denying access to Tower Hamlets, the British government has effectively ceased sovereignty to that area by banning Robinson and Carroll from walking from point A to point B.

What is certain is that citizens are banned from exercising their right to walk the streets of their capital city; thus this constitutes a restriction on their freedom of movement.

Recommendations:

- BPE reminds the United Kingdom of its commitments to facilitate public assemblies.
- BPE calls upon the United Kingdom to effectively prosecute those who attack public rallies.
- Finally, BPE calls upon ODIHR to send observers to assess the situation on the ground in the United Kingdom.