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Plenary sitting

13.12.2011

B7-0721/2011

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Syria (2011/2880(RSP))

Geoffrey Van Orden, Marek Henryk Migalski, Michał Tomasz Kamiński, Adam Bielan, Ryszard Antoni Legutko, Tomasz Piotr Poręba, Valdemar Tomaševski, Ryszard Czarnecki, Sajjad Karim, Charles Tannock
on behalf of the ECR Group

European Parliament resolution on the situation in Syria (2011/2880(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria,
- having regard to Council Decision 2011/523/EU partially suspending the application of the Cooperation Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Syrian Arab Republic, Council Regulation (EU) No 878/2011 of 2 September 2011 amending Regulation (EU) No 442/2011 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Syria, and Council Regulation (EU) No 1011/2011 of 13 October 2011 amending Regulation (EU) No 442/2011 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Syria, Council Decision 2011/782/CFSP of 1 December 2011, concerning restrictive measures against Syria and repealing Decision 2011/273/CFSP,
- having regard to the statements of the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) on Syria of 8 and 31 July; 1, 4, 18, 19, 23 and 30 August; 2 and 23 September; 12 October 2011; 3 and 28 November; and 2 December 2011,
- having regard to the Council conclusions on Syria of 18 July, 10 October and 1 December 2011,
- having regard to the Joint Communication on ‘A new response to a changing neighbourhood’ of the European Commission and the High Representative to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions of 25 May 2011,
- having regard to the UNGA Resolution on Human Rights in Syria of 22 November 2011,
- having regard to the UN Security Council Presidential Statement of 3 August 2011,
- having regard to the UNHRC Resolution on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic of 23 August 2011,
- having regard to the Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the UNHRC on 23 November 2011,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966, to which Syria is party,
- having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas there has been eight months of continued unrest and bloodshed since significant

demonstrations began against the Syrian regime in March 2011;

- B. whereas the UN estimates the death toll in Syria as a result of the unrest to exceed 5,000, of which the majority have been civilians, and whereas many more are injured;
 - C. whereas the High Commissioner's fact-finding mission of 19 August found evidence of hundreds of summary executions, the use of live ammunition against demonstrators, the widespread deployment of snipers during protests, the detention and torture of people of all ages, blockading of towns and cities by the security forces and the destruction of water supplies;
 - D. whereas citizens of Syria are subjected to arbitrary arrest and imprisonment without trial, or trial by military court and have no independent judiciary to defend them, no freedom of speech and no right to demonstrate guaranteed by law;
 - E. whereas it is reported that cities and towns throughout Syria are kept under siege by government-led forces, without access to food, medical supplies or communications;
 - F. whereas despite many public statements committing to political reform, President Bashar al-Assad has failed to act to implement a specific agenda that would safeguard public freedoms and judicial independence and prohibit the Syrian government from encroaching on human rights;
 - G. whereas the Syrian government uses the Supreme State Security Court (SSSC), a special court that remains outside the ordinary criminal justice system, to try political activists and human rights defenders;
 - H. whereas the Gulf Cooperation Council will work with the authorities in Syria to begin the transition towards free elections and the handover of power by President Assad;
 - I. whereas on 2 September, 13 October and 1 December the EU Member States have agreed extended sanctions, in addition to existing restrictions applied to Syria;
 - J. whereas President Assad has ignored countless calls by the international community to put an end to the horrific violence in Syria;
 - K. whereas civil unrest and the Syrian authority's brutal repression of the Syrian people now threaten to draw the country into a state of all out civil war which in turn risks a regional conflict;
- 1. Condemns the decisions of China and Russia to veto attempts made in the United Nations to draft a resolution condemning Syria's violent crack down on anti-government protests; expresses disappointment at the lack of a joint response from the UN Security Council concerning the brutal actions of the Syrian authorities and calls upon the international community to be united in their condemnation of the Syrian regime's response to demonstrations;
 - 2. Strongly condemns the use of violence by all actors in Syria;

3. Calls on the Syrian regime to lift the siege of Homs and allow in international aid and relief efforts, to withdraw all Syrian forces from the towns and cities of Syria;
4. Welcomes the Arab League's leadership in seeking an end to the horrific violence in Syria; reminds the Syrian regime that the latest deadline for signing the Arab league peace initiative expired on Sunday 4 December; urges the Syrian regime to sign the Arab League Peace Initiative immediately and implement the conditions accordingly, such as withdrawing all military forces from towns and villages around the country, releasing detainees, and allowing observers to verify the situation on the ground;
5. Welcomes the condemnation of the Syrian regime by Turkey and Saudi Arabia and Turkey's role in accepting refugees; Regrets Iran's continuing support for President Al Assad's intransigent position and brutal repression of his people;
6. Welcomes the Council's conclusions on 1 December, and supports the extension of sanctions against the Syrian regime;
7. Insists that the government of Syria guarantees protection from attack for protesters and upholds the right of protesters to take part in peaceful demonstrations, to guarantee freedom of expression; Calls on the Syrian government therefore to cease immediately the use of force against peaceful protesters;
8. Notes that President Assad bears ultimately responsibility as the constitutional and legal head of the Syrian state for all actions carried out by the armed forces; Urges President Assad to recognise the rejection of his regime by the Syrian people and to step aside in the best interests of Syria and the unity of its people;
9. Calls upon the Syrian government to set up an independent, effective and transparent investigation into the security forces' actions and in particular the activities of the President's brother in command of special forces and to hold accountable any member of the security services who shot at or ordered the shooting of unarmed protesters with live ammunition;
10. Expresses concern about reports of increased presence amongst protesters of armed Islamist forces with smuggled weapons inciting jihad and shooting at security forces, which threatens all out civil war along a sectarian basis;
11. Calls upon the Syrian government to desist from the arbitrary arrest and detention of political activists, human rights defenders and journalists, and release all prisoners of conscience; Calls upon the authorities in Syria to account publicly for everyone who has been killed, injured or those who remain missing;
12. Expresses serious concern that intimidation by Syrian authorities may be extending to exiled opposition activists;
13. Calls upon the Syrian government to allow immediate and unconditional access for human rights agencies and humanitarian workers;

14. Calls for open and peaceful dialogue between the Syrian government and the people of Syria; strongly urges the government of Syria to act upon its public commitments and implement democratic reforms without delay, with full respect for all minority groups;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces of Egypt and the Secretary-General of the Arab League and the Government and Parliament of the Syrian Arab Republic.