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Plenary sitting

7.3.2012

B7-0131/2012

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 Nigeria (2012/2550(RSP))

Charles Tannock, Peter van Dalen, Tomasz Piotr Poręba, Konrad Szymański, Ryszard Antoni Legutko, Ryszard Czarnecki
on behalf of the ECR Group

European Parliament resolution on the situation in Nigeria (2012/2550(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Nigeria, in particular of 6 May 2010 on the mass atrocities in Jos, Nigeria,
 - having regard to the statements by High Representative Catherine Ashton and her Spokespersons, in particular of 26 December 2011 and 22 January 2012,
 - having regard to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and in particular the provisions on the protection of freedom of religion set out in its Chapter IV - Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,
 - having regard to the revised Cotonou Agreement, in particular Article 8 thereof,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas in 1999 one-third of Nigeria's 36 states instituted the Islamic penal code, making Sharia (Islamic) law the highest legal authority, creating a de facto state religion in violation of the national, secular constitution; whereas sentencing provisions under Sharia law include the death penalty for 'sexual misdemeanours', amputations, and floggings; whereas the proceedings of these courts are incompatible with accepted international standards of due process and discriminate against women;
- B. whereas according to human rights reports, in 2012, religious violence in Northern Nigeria cost the lives of about 1 000 people;
- C. whereas recent violent events include a bomb attack against the United Nations premises in Abuja on 26 August 2011, attacks on churches and religious symbols across Nigeria during the 2011 Christmas period, a wave of attacks which killed more than 150 citizens in Kano, Northern Nigeria on 20 January and a suicide attack on a church in Jos on 26 February 2012;
- D. whereas the terrorist organisation Boko Haram has become responsible for much of the violence in recent years and continues to intensify its attacks;
- E. whereas militant groups in the south have threatened to retaliate against Muslim northerners living in the south if the attacks against Christians in the north do not stop;
- F. whereas the root causes of this violence include not only ethnic and religious division, but also widespread poverty, inequality, patronage systems and internecine political divisions; whereas although Nigeria is the world's eighth-largest oil producer the majority of its inhabitants live below the poverty line;
- G. whereas 2012 began in Nigeria with nationwide strikes and mass demonstrations against

government corruption and soaring fuel prices after subsidies were cut;

- H. whereas the EU is a major financial donor to Nigeria and whereas the European Commission and the Federal Government of Nigeria on 12 November 2009 have signed the Nigeria-EC Country Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme for the period 2008-2013 under which the EU will fund projects aimed at inter alia peace and security and human rights;
1. Strongly condemns the terrorist attacks on Christian communities, their belongings and symbols and the violent clashes and the resulting tragic loss of lives; expresses its solidarity and condolences to the victims and their families;
 2. Calls on the Federal and State governments to do more to protect vulnerable communities, especially in northern and central parts of the country, particularly Yobe and Bauchi states, by way of increased regular patrols of police forces;
 3. Welcomes the efforts made at Federal and State levels leading to the arrest of persons known or found to be involved in violent attacks; calls on the Nigerian authorities to bring an end to impunity by ensuring the prosecution of perpetrators, and to ensure that people do not take the law into their own hands;
 4. Calls upon the Nigerian authorities to not only try and prevent further violence, but to also address the root causes, such as the almajiri system, widespread poverty, economic inequalities, lack of access to fertile farmland and other resources, corruption, police violence and hate speech;
 5. Calls on the Nigerian Government to intervene in individual cases of persons tried under Sharia law and sentenced to death, amputation, flogging or other inhuman and degrading treatment that violates the Nigerian Constitution as well as international human rights law;
 6. Urges the EU to continue its political dialogue with Nigeria under Article 8 of the revised Cotonou Agreement and in that context to address issues relating to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, as enshrined in universal, regional and national human rights instruments;
 7. 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, and the Government and Parliament of Nigeria.