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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
(2014/2531(RSP))

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on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Syria
(2014/2531(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria,
 - having regard to the conclusions of the EU Foreign Affairs Council on Syria, including those of 20 January 2014,
 - having regard to the statements by Vice-President / High Representative Catherine Ashton on the situation in Syria,
 - having regard to the UN Security Council resolutions on Syria, including that of 27 September 2013 on the dismantlement of the Syrian chemical weapons arsenal (S/RES/2118(2013)),
 - having regard to the final communiqué of the Action Group for Syria ('the Geneva communiqué') of 30 June 2012,
 - having regard to the UN Human Rights Council resolutions on Syria, including that of 24 September 2013 on the deterioration of the human rights and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic (A/HRC/24/L.38),
 - having regard to the 6th report of the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria of 11 September 2013,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and to the international human rights and humanitarian law instruments to which Syria is a party,
 - having regard to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the additional protocols thereto, the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993,
 - having regard to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas three years into the Syrian conflict, the dramatic human rights, humanitarian and security situation continues to deteriorate; whereas Syrian Government troops continue to use brutal force against civilian populations; whereas, to a lesser extent, violations of human rights and humanitarian law by opposition forces are also being reported; whereas religious extremism and sectarian violence are on the increase, and radical Islamist groups, including EU nationals, are now reported to have reached significant numbers; whereas the military confrontation appears to have reached a stalemate whereby no warring party seems to be about to collapse or capitulate;
- B. whereas an estimated 130 000 people, including an overwhelming majority of

non-combatants, have been killed since the beginning of the conflict; whereas an estimated 9 million people are affected by the ongoing violence and in need of humanitarian assistance, with 6.5 million people internally displaced and 2.3 million having sought refuge abroad, according to UN figures;

- C. whereas the Syrian authorities continue to impose severe restrictions on the delivery of humanitarian aid; whereas the Syrian regime continues deliberately to cut off access to food, water, electricity and medical supplies to entire communities;
- D. whereas a large number of civil society activists, human rights defenders, intellectuals, journalists and medical professionals are subject to harassment, arrest, torture or disappearance at the hands of the Syrian regime, and increasingly also of the rebel groups; whereas 2011 Sakharov laureate Razan Zeitouneh was abducted alongside her husband and other human rights defenders in Damascus in December 2013 and their fate remains unknown;
- E. whereas the continuous violence has had a dramatic destabilisation effect on neighbouring countries, notably due to the mass refugee flows; whereas these countries are facing tremendous domestic challenges of their own, with Lebanon and Jordan being particularly vulnerable;
- F. whereas the 560 000 Palestinian refugees in Syria constitute a particularly vulnerable group affected by the conflict; whereas 20 000 Palestinians in the besieged Yarmouk refugee camp outside Damascus are facing mass suffering, with 57 people reportedly having starved to death;
- G. whereas total EU funding for humanitarian assistance to Syria and neighbouring countries has reached EUR 1.1 billion; whereas UN appeals for the Syrian crisis continue to be unmet; whereas 0.6 % of the Syrian refugees have been resettled in the European Union;
- H. whereas the Geneva II conference on Syria was launched on 22 January 2014 on the basis of the Geneva communiqué of June 2012 and following intense efforts by the international community; whereas the Syrian opposition is represented by the National Coalition of Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, while several rebel groups such as ISIL and Jabhat al-Nusra are not represented; whereas the Democratic Unity Party (PYD), which controls the so-called Western Kurdistan, is not represented; whereas Iran was disinvited from the conference;
- I. whereas the first round of the Geneva II talks, mediated by UN-Arab League Joint Representative Lakhdar Brahimi, took place in a tense atmosphere, focusing on the question of political transition and the role of President Bashar al-Assad in this process; whereas a certain level of agreement was reported on local ceasefires to allow access for humanitarian workers, while no tangible progress was reached concerning the besieged city of Homs; whereas a new round of discussions has been announced for 10 February 2014;
- J. whereas the Geneva communiqué calls for a transition government that ‘could include members of the present [Syrian] government and the opposition and other groups and

shall be formed on the basis of mutual consent’;

- K. whereas Government forces have continued to carry out their military offensive since the beginning of the Geneva talks, including mass and indiscriminate air strikes that killed scores of civilians in the city of Aleppo;
 - L. whereas the Syrian Government agreed to the removal and destruction of its chemical weapons arsenal under the aegis of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) by 30 June 2014; whereas so far, 4.1 % of its total stockpile has been shipped out of the country for destruction; whereas according to UN Security Council Resolution 2118 of 27 September 2013, non-compliance may prompt measures under Chapter VII of the UN Charter;
1. Remains profoundly dismayed by the harrowing level of human suffering and loss of life in the Syrian conflict; denounces, once again, the continued, criminal onslaught by the Syrian regime against its own population, which has led to the most devastating humanitarian crisis in decades and has gravely destabilised the entire region;
 2. Condemns the continuation of the military offensive by the Syrian Government against civilians, and urges the EU and the Geneva II partners to negotiate, in the sidelines of the Geneva process, an immediate ceasefire in order to give a chance to the negotiations;
 3. Denounces the gross, systematic and widespread violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by the Syrian regime and its affiliated militias, including extrajudicial executions, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture, sexual violence and large-scale demolition of homes;
 4. Condemns all violations of humanitarian and human rights law committed by armed rebel forces; expresses alarm at the rise in religious extremism, fuelled by the ongoing conflict and external involvement; warns of the grave risks of spill-over posed by this phenomenon for the region and beyond, including the EU;
 5. Welcomes the launch of the Geneva II conference on Syria on 22 January, and lauds the efforts of UN Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi in enabling this first, direct interaction between the warring parties; calls on the Syrian parties, and particularly the government, to take up their historic responsibilities in ending the conflict and to make the hard compromises which are necessary for the formation of a fully empowered transition government;
 6. Is without illusions as to the magnitude of the challenges at hand, yet believes that there is no alternative to finding a political and democratic solution to this conflict, which should envisage cultural, ethnic and religious diversity for Syria; expresses the hope that the Geneva talks will trigger a process which will eventually lead to a transition towards a peaceful, democratic and inclusive future for the Syrian people;
 7. Supports the approach aiming at confidence-building measures, which can substantially alleviate the plight of the population in the absence of a solution on the core political issues; calls on the negotiating parties urgently to reach an agreement on the issues of

ceasefires, humanitarian access, the delivery of humanitarian aid and the release of political prisoners; underlines, in this connection, the responsibility of Russia and Iran in pressing the Syrian regime to concede on these matters;

8. Calls on all non-radical Syrian opposition forces within and outside the country to overcome their internal divisions and to engage constructively in the negotiations;
9. Calls on all international players genuinely to support the Geneva process at this critical juncture; deplores the disinvitation of Iran from the Geneva talks; urges the regional sponsors, notably Saudi Arabia and Iran, to abandon their unhelpful positions and to engage actively in a process of de-escalation; insists that all arms transfers and logistical and financial support to the Syrian regime and to rebel groups responsible for violations of human rights and international humanitarian law cease immediately;
10. Calls for the EU and its Member States to enhance their support for the democratic forces in the Syrian opposition and to facilitate dialogue and a common approach in support of the Geneva talks with other international players, notably Russia, Iran and the Arab League;
11. Calls for an evaluation of the pertinence of the responses of the international community, and notably of the European Union, to the developments in Syria since the popular uprising, in order to draw lessons for the future;
12. Is convinced that there can be no sustainable peace in Syria without accountability for the serious crimes committed during the conflict; calls on the negotiating parties to ensure that the fight against impunity is an integral part of any final agreement; underlines, in particular, the importance of providing for a comprehensive transitional justice mechanism and the reform of the security apparatus, as well as excluding any amnesty provisions;
13. Reiterates its call for the referral of the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court; deplores the lack of EU action in support of this initiative and calls on the Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to take demonstrable action in this direction;
14. Strongly supports the continued work of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria; calls on all actors involved carefully to monitor human rights violations and to collect all types of testimonies in order to allow for full accountability and justice in post-Assad Syria;
15. Highlights the need to release all political detainees, as well as civil society activists, humanitarian aid workers and journalists who are in custody, and to grant access for independent monitors to all places of detention; expresses its deepest concern about the fate of 2011 Sakharov Prize laureate Razan Zeithouneh, and calls for the establishment of an EU interinstitutional action group to coordinate efforts to secure her release;
16. Calls for particular attention to be paid to the plight of the Palestinian population affected by the conflict; calls on donors generously to support ongoing efforts by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency; denounces the most extreme conditions in

the Palestinian refugee camp of Yarmouk, and requests immediate action from the Syrian authorities to enable humanitarian access and aid to reach this starving population;

17. Reiterates its support for the peaceful destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons arsenal under the OPCW framework; calls for particular attention to be paid to the environmental safety of the destruction process and the management of the remaining waste; highlights the need for transparency, information and involvement of national and regional authorities of the regions affected in the event of an accident or of inefficiency of the method; insists that the Syrian authorities comply with the agreed timeframe and calls on the Syrian opposition to contribute constructively to this process; recalls the importance of holding the Helsinki Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, which was repeatedly postponed;
18. Remains gravely preoccupied by the implications of the prolonged and growing presence of Syrian refugees in the neighbouring countries, in particular Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey; encourages the Commission and the Member States to continue providing substantial humanitarian assistance to the populations affected by the Syrian conflict, notably in the neighbouring countries; deplores the very limited number of refugees resettled in the EU and calls on the Member States to show a greater degree of responsibility, notably by reinforcing their protection response;
19. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Secretary-General, the UN–Arab League Special Envoy to Syria, and the Government and Parliament of Syria.