



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Plenary sitting

19.2.2014

B7-0188/2014

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 Iraq
(2014/2565(RSP))

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on behalf of the ALDE Group

B7-0188/2014

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Iraq
(2014/2565(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Iraq, in particular that of 14 March 2013 on ‘Iraq: the plight of minority groups, including the Iraqi Turkmen’¹,
- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Iraq, of the other part, and to its resolution of 17 January 2013 on the EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement²,
- having regard to the Commission’s Joint Strategy Paper for Iraq (2011-2013),
- having regard to the ‘Report on Human Rights in Iraq: January to June 2012’, presented jointly by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on 19 December 2012,
- having regard to the International Crisis Group’s Middle East Report No 144 of 14 August 2013 entitled ‘Make or Break: Iraq’s Sunnis and the State’,
- having regard to the UN casualty figures for September 2013, released on 1 October 2013,
- having regard to the statement of 29 July 2013 by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, urging leaders to pull Iraq ‘back from the brink’,
- having regard to the statement of 1 September 2013 by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the tragic events in Camp Ashraf which killed 52 people,
- having regard to the 1981 UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief,
- having regard to the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iraq is a party,
- having regard to the statement of 5 September 2013 by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, on the recent violence in Iraq,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 June 2013 on the freedom of press and media in the

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0101.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0022.

world¹,

- having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Iraq continues to face serious political, security and socioeconomic challenges, and whereas its political scene is extremely fragmented and plagued by violence and sectarian politics, to the severe detriment of the Iraqi people's legitimate aspirations for peace, prosperity and a genuine transition to democracy;
- B. whereas, according to casualty figures released by UNAMI, a total of 7 818 civilians were killed in 2013 and a further 17 981 injured, making it the deadliest year since 2008; whereas in January 2014, 661 civilians were killed and a further 1 201 injured; whereas Baghdad has consistently been the worst-hit region;
- C. whereas the spill-over from the Syrian crisis reached a new high point earlier this year when militants from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) took over the cities of Ramadi and Fallujah, as well as parts of Anbar province; whereas fighters from Iraq also play a prominent role on both sides in the Syrian crisis; whereas Iraq has reportedly allowed the transport of weapons and supplies from Iran to the Syrian regime and Hezbollah;
- D. whereas, according to figures from UNHCR, 222 759 Syrian refugees are residing in Iraq, but the number is probably higher;
- E. whereas the Iraqi authorities often rely on Sunni tribes in Anbar province to combat extremist insurgents;
- F. whereas more than 300 000 people have fled the recent surge of violence in Anbar province;
- G. whereas serious social and economic problems – widespread poverty, high unemployment, economic stagnation, environmental degradation and a lack of basic public services – continue to affect a large proportion of the population; whereas numerous peaceful demonstrations demanding more social, economic and political rights continue to result in very systematic repression by the security forces, carried out with impunity;
- H. whereas press and media freedom has been repeatedly and increasingly under attack from both the government and extremist groups; whereas journalists and news outlets have been attacked or censored, and Reporters Without Borders has reported a news blackout on the situation in Anbar province; whereas Iraq is rated as 'not free' by the Freedom House 2014 Freedom in the World report;
- I. whereas the Iraqi constitution guarantees equality before the law for all citizens, along with the 'administrative, political, cultural and educational rights of the various nationalities'; whereas the Iraqi Government bears responsibility for the well-being and security of the whole population;

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0274.

- J. whereas policies by the Shia-dominated Iraqi Government, including the violent repression of Sunni protests, have increased sectarian tension and alienated parts of the Iraqi population;
- K. whereas the EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, in particular its human rights clause, emphasises that the EU-Iraq political dialogue should focus on human rights and strengthening democratic institutions;
1. Strongly condemns acts of terrorism and heightened sectarian violence, which carries the danger that the country will fall back into further sectarian strife and is generating fears of wider sectarian conflict across the region; points out that although the causes of the violence are political rather than religious, involvement by extremist groups such as ISIS has further deepened the crisis;
 2. Extends its condolences to the families and friends of the deceased and injured;
 3. Points out that counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency should comprise more than just military action and must consist of a comprehensive approach which addresses the root causes of the violence, as well as policies to foster trust, security and inclusive social and economic development;
 4. Expresses its grave concern over the new surge of instability and calls on all Iraqi political leaders, from all ethnic and religious backgrounds, to work together to put an end to sectarian violence and distrust and to bring the Iraqi people together;
 5. Calls on both the Government of Iraq and the regional governments to condemn attacks and facilitate a full and swift independent international investigation into the recent terrorist attacks in the region, and calls on the Iraqi Government to cooperate fully with this investigation in order to bring those responsible to justice;
 6. Is concerned about the spill-over of violence from the conflict in Syria into Iraq, where jihadist rebels linked to ISIS have risen to prominence; calls on the Government of Iraq to do its utmost to prevent fighters from crossing from or into Syria and to stop any arms transfers from Iran that may be taking place across Iraqi borders or airspace;
 7. Commends the Iraqi Government for hosting a large number of Syrian refugees; calls on the Commission and the Member States to continue supporting Iraq and other neighbouring countries in hosting refugees and ensuring their well-being;
 8. Calls, as a matter of urgency, on political, religious and civil leaders and the security forces to start working together to end the bloodshed and ensure that all Iraqi citizens are, in reality, equally protected;
 9. Calls on the Iraqi Government and on all political leaders to take the necessary measures to provide security and protection for all people in Iraq, in particular members of vulnerable minorities; calls on the Iraqi Government to ensure that the security forces comply with the rule of law and international standards;
 10. Calls on all state and non-state actors to respect the freedom of the press and media and

to protect journalists and news outlets from violence; recognises that a free press and media are essential parts of a functioning democracy, providing access to information and a platform for citizens;

11. Calls on the international community and the EU to support the Iraqi Government by promoting initiatives for national dialogue, consolidation of the rule of law, and the provision of basic services, with the goal of creating a secure, stable, unified, prosperous and democratic Iraq in which the human and political rights of all people are protected;
12. Calls on the Iraqi authorities, given that the security situation has exacerbated problems for more vulnerable groups such as women, journalists, young people and fundamental rights activists, including trade unionists, to take urgent action to direct more resources towards programmes aimed at improving the situation;
13. Encourages religious dialogue between Sunni and Shia clerics as a necessary tool for conflict resolution; considers that the recent talks between the E3+3 and Iran also afford an opportunity for Iraq to act as a bridge, given that it is one of the few countries to have strong relations with both parties; calls on Iranian leaders to engage constructively in the stabilisation of the region;
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Council of Representatives of Iraq, the Regional Government of Kurdistan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the United Nations Human Rights Council.