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*Plenary sitting*

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B8-0380/2014

## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on the persecution of the democratic opposition in Venezuela  
(2014/2998(RSP))

**Javier Couso Permuy, Marina Albiol Guzmán, Sabine Lösing, Fabio De Masi, Inês Cristina Zuber, João Ferreira, Miguel Viegas, Neoklis Sylikiotis, Takis Hadjigeorgiou, Kostas Chrysogonos, Eleonora Forenza, Ángela Vallina, Paloma López Bermejo, Lidia Senra Rodríguez, Sofia Sakorafa, Kostadinka Kuneva, Georgios Katrougkalos,**  
on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

**European Parliament resolution on the persecution of the democratic opposition in Venezuela  
(2014/2998(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Chapter 1, Article 1(2) of the UN Charter of 1945, with its stated purpose ‘to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace’,
- having regard to Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, both of which state that ‘all peoples have the right of self-determination’ and that ‘by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development’,
- having regard to the principle of non-intervention laid down in the UN Charter,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the conclusions of the last Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review on Venezuela;
- having regard to the declaration of the CELAC-EU Summit of Heads of State and Government of 27 January 2013, in which the signatories reaffirm their commitment to all the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and their decision to support all efforts to uphold sovereign equality of all states and to respect their territorial integrity and political independence,
- having regard to the statements on the situation in Venezuela by MERCOSUR, UNASUR, OAS and CELAC, in particular to the OAS Permanent Council Declaration on solidarity and support for democratic institutions, dialogue and peace in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela of 7 March 2014,
- having regard to the declarations by the Argentinian Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Pérez Esquivel on Venezuela,
- having regard to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy on Venezuela, in particular those of 14 and 21 February 28 March and 15 April 2014,
- having regard to its previous resolutions on Venezuela, in particular those of 24 May 2007, 23 October 2008, 7 May 2009, 11 February 2010, 8 July 2010, 24 May 2012 and 27 February 2014,
- having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas on 12 February 2014 a demonstration was organised by students following a call of right-wing and extreme-right political parties; whereas after this demonstration a group of violent demonstrators attacked, with firearms and blunt objects, the building housing the Attorney-General's office and several government buildings in Caracas and other Venezuelan cities, committing acts of violence and destruction against public property, as well as blocking the main traffic artery of Caracas; whereas 3 people died that night during the clashes;

B. whereas the violence continued for several months with the clear aim of destabilising the democratically elected government of Venezuela; whereas between February and June this year 44 people have been killed and 878 wounded; whereas this strategy was not new, as the scenario is similar to that of the coup of 2002 and the violence which followed the democratic election of President Nicolás Maduro in April 2013; whereas opposition leaders refused then to recognise the election results and have repeatedly boosted violence, whereas the night of the elections 11 Venezuelans died following attacks to the Bolivarian celebrations;

C. whereas President Maduro called for a National Peace Conference in Venezuela which was held on 26 February with all political and social sectors willing to attend, including opposition leader and former Presidential candidate Enrique Capriles Radonski; whereas in March 2014 UNASUR ministerial mission visited the country in support of an inclusive dialogue, whereas in April 2014 meetings between the government, the opposition, students organisations, trade unions, enterprises and religious groups took place with the mediations of UNASUR and the Vatican;

D. whereas the Venezuelan Committee of Victims of Road Barricades Violence ("Comité de Víctimas de la Guarimba y el Golpe Continuo"), formed by victims and relatives of this violence, has called the international community to refrain from a political instrumentalisation of human rights and to not cooperate with Venezuelan political actors which try to silence or manipulate the actions of violence and hate which suffered Venezuela from February to June; whereas the relatives of the victims has asked that those responsible will be prosecuted and to stop the promotion of impunity concerning the human rights violations promoted in the country;

E. whereas the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has declared that these acts of violence are encouraged, organised and financed from abroad by organisations such as USAID or the US National Endowment for Democracy; whereas according to Wikileaks the US Department of State has been financing the Venezuelan opposition for at least 12 years;

F. whereas major part of national and international media were presenting these events in a one-sided way; whereas the manipulation of information, in particular via social networks, spread rumours and fake images taken in Syria, Chile, Egypt, Spain or Singapore as if they were from Venezuela;

G. whereas this wave of subversive violence was happening at a time when the legitimate authorities of Venezuela were launching a dialogue process with part of the opposition as well as intensifying measures to combat the various forms of speculation and economic warfare affecting the country;

H. whereas Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Pérez Esquivel called for the defence of democracy in Venezuela against attempts to destabilise the government, warning that coup attempts were advancing via new methodologies in Latin America and denouncing the

corporate media multinationals such as CNN and Fox that broadcast war propaganda in the name of peace and hatred in the name of freedom;

I. Whereas 1,322 individuals were arrested in connection to violence acts and appeared before a court; whereas 1,103 were released with substitute precautionary measures and 92 were released without charges; whereas 35 remained arrested accused of crimes as alteration of public order, serious injuries, cruel treatment or homicide; whereas only of them has proved to be a student;

J. Whereas 14 policemen and members of the National Guard remain arrested for their force abuses; whereas the public prosecutor's office has repeatedly accused police civil servants of alleged crimes;

K. whereas Venezuela's chief prosecutor has launched an investigation against María Corina Machado on conspiracy charges, as she would have discussed with US State Department officials a plot to overthrow the Venezuelan Government; whereas in 2002 she signed the Carmona Decree during her participation in the coup d'état against President Hugo Chávez; whereas she benefited from Presidential amnesty, run for elections and was elected in 2010 as member of the National Assembly; whereas in March 2014 she appeared as an alternate envoy of Panama at the OAS (Organization of American States) and therefore was removed from the National Assembly, in application of Articles 149 and 191 of the Venezuelan Constitution;

L. Whereas national coordinator of Voluntad Popular, Leopoldo López, remains in prison accused of incitement to violence in a demonstration against legitimate government of Venezuela on February 12, whereas the demonstration took place after López's vehement callings to bring down the government, and whereas members of its party thrown 'molotov cocktails' against the building of the Attorney General; whereas the Attorney General has charged López for incitement to violence, public intimidation, homicide, serious damages and terrorism; whereas López played an important role during the coup d'état in 2002, after which he was prosecuted and, later on in 2007, discharged by an amnesty given by President Hugo Chávez;

M. whereas Laurent Gomez Saleh, who has been considered by international media as a leader of the opposition students and former national coordinator of the NGO JAVU "Juventud Activa Venezuela Unida" and president of the NGO "Operación Libertad Internacional", was deported to Venezuela by Colombian migration agents, while he was following military training in Colombia, where he illegally registered at Colombia School of Warfare of the Armed Forces, from which was expelled; whereas he was apprehended already in 2010 while participating in violent actions, whereas during the judicial procedure warlike material of his property was confiscated; whereas according to records he would have expressed his intention of committing terrorist actions, as blowing-up liquor stores, nightclubs, a border bridge or even the regional headquarters of the National Electoral Council and he would have also talked about the need to assassinate Bolivarian popular leaders with a special elite unit of 20 people;

N. whereas last 1 October the youngest member of the Venezuelan Parliament, PSUV (United Socialist Party of Venezuela) MP Rodolfo Serra was killed together with the young leader María Herrera at their home in a terrorist attack committed by a paramilitary group;

O. whereas last 21 October the headquarters of the JCV (Venezuelan Communist Youth) in El Paraíso (Caracas) were attacked with incendiary devices;

P. whereas 19 different elections have taken place in Venezuela in the last 14 years; whereas the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela includes mechanisms of participative democracy, such as the provision for a referendum revoking the President's mandate;

Q. whereas on 6 and 7 November the Venezuelan State appeared before the UN Committee against Torture which will scrutinize the state's compliance with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

R. whereas the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is a member of the UN Human Rights Council; whereas it has been also elected in October 2014 as one of the five rotating seats at the UN Security Council for the period 2015-2016;

S. whereas the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has accepted 97% of the recommendations of last Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review of 2011; whereas 80% of the recommendations were directly applicable and Venezuelan State has committed itself on the implementation of the other accepted recommendations;

T. whereas between 2006 and 2013 Venezuela moved up thirteen places, to 67<sup>th</sup> place out of 187, in the UN Human Development Index; whereas over the last decade the Government of Venezuela has increased social expenditure by more than 60.6 %; whereas Venezuela today is the country with the lowest inequality rate in the region; whereas according to CEPAL (the UN Economic Commission for Latin America), Venezuela significantly reduced its poverty rate and increased life expectancy;

U. whereas Venezuela is the world's fifth largest oil-exporting country and has the world's largest proven oil reserves; whereas according to the Draft Budget 2015, 38% of public expenditure will be devoted to social investment, including education, housing and urban development, healthcare, social security, culture, communication and science and technology -amounting to 8,2% of Venezuela's GDP;

V. whereas US President Barack Obama is planning to sign into law a bill that would levy sanctions against Venezuela; whereas Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro has announced it would damage their bilateral diplomatic relations, and has reiterated the will to have relations of peace and respect with the US, but without any interference in Venezuelan domestic policies;

1. Regrets the loss of lives and expresses its condolences to the families of the victims; calls for those responsible of committing or inciting these crimes to be held accountable for these acts; expresses its respect to the judicial system of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, therefore rejects any interference on the on-going judicial proceedings at national level; strongly condemns the coup attempts and continued violence from February to June by right-wing and extreme-right opposition groups in Venezuela;

2. Recalls its full respect for the principle of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of states in accordance to international law; deeply deplores any interference by the EU or any country

in the internal affairs of third countries; in this line regrets the announcement by the US to impose sanctions against Venezuela;

3. Deplores the destabilisation attempts against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela through violent acts, in a framework similar to the previous coup attempts of 2002; regrets the coup track record of a part of the opposition, like María Corina Machado or Leopoldo López, who have on previous occasions placed themselves outside the democratic framework in attempting to break the Venezuelan constitutional order;

4. Denounces the undemocratic and insurgent aims of this destabilisation campaign, unleashed on to the streets of Caracas and other Venezuelan cities by extremist groups; highlights the imperialist interest of the US in ensuring its access to Venezuela's oil resources and its political aim of undermining the countries of ALBA;

5. Reiterates its full support for and solidarity with the Venezuelan people, the Bolivarian process and the elected President Nicolás Maduro; rejects all attacks on Venezuelan democracy and sovereignty;

6. Deplores the role played by major part of international media in spreading rumours and using fake images with the aim of generating an atmosphere of violence and destabilisation that undermines the Venezuelan Government; recalls that freedom of information is a fundamental human right, and calls on the international media to act responsibly and cover the events in a fair, accurate and balanced manner, which is not currently the case;

7. Stresses that dialogue with third countries should not under any circumstances result in restrictions being imposed on the right of peoples to self-determination; deplores the fact that the EU and its Member States too often give priority to diplomatic, political or economic considerations over human rights, an approach which, moreover, gives rise to a policy characterised by double standards, which is at odds with a universal vision of human rights; denounces the spurious utilisation of human rights with political aims by the European Parliament in particular in the case of Venezuela, reminds it is the 8th urgency resolution on this country since 2007, most of the times previously to elections or simultaneously with a destabilisation process;

8. Welcomes the implementation of policies of social inclusion in Venezuela based on social responsibility and justice, equality, solidarity and human rights that has helped to reduce inequality in the country, in particular their social development measures and the progress made in the area of education, as the eradication of illiteracy in 2005 or the multiplication of the number of high education students;

9. Recalls the importance of Venezuela's role in the creation and strengthening of a cooperation and integration process for the benefit of the peoples of Latin America; celebrates the 10 anniversary of the creation of ALBA, which now gathers 9 countries; underlines the significant progress made for regional integration and cooperation in favour of the peoples of Latin America; welcomes the significant achievements of ALBA and CELAC in the fields of health, education, culture and financial integration;

10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the MERCOSUR Parliament, Euro-

Latin American Parliamentary Assembly and to Latin-American regional bodies as UNASUR, ALBA and CELAC.