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Plenary sitting

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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 situation of the Yarmouk refugee camp in Syria
(2015/2664(RSP))

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on behalf of the ALDE Group

European Parliament resolution on the situation of the Yarmouk refugee camp in Syria (2015/2664(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria, in particular the one of 11 February 2015 on the humanitarian crisis in Iraq and Syria, in particular in the IS context,
- having regard to the statement by the HR/VP for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini and the Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides of 10 April 2015, on the situation in Yarmouk, Syria; having regard to the declaration by the High Representative on 18 April 2015, on the situation in the Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp in Syria,
- having regard to United Nations Security Council resolutions 2139, 2165 and 2191 (2014),
- having regard to the daily Reports of the UNRWA on the situation in Yarmouk,
- having regard to the Security Council press statement of 21 April 2015, on Yarmouk Refugee Camp,
- having regard to the statement of Pierre Krähenbühl, Commissioner-General for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East of 13 April 2015, on the crisis in Yarmouk,
- having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. whereas the ongoing violent crisis in Syria has resulted in a humanitarian catastrophe of an unprecedented scale in history, with more than 200.000 people, most of them civilians, killed, and more than 7.6 million people internally displaced and almost 4 million refugees, due to war and repression of the Assad regime, ISIS/Daesh, Jabhat al-Nusra and other terrorist groups; whereas the terrorist organisation Islamic State (IS) has established unlawful, so-called ‘shari’a courts’ in the territory under its control, carrying out cruel and inhuman punishments against men, women and children;
- B. whereas Yarmouk, the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Syria, formed in 1957 to accommodate people fleeing the Arab-Israeli conflict, has been engulfed in fighting between the Syrian government and armed groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra and the rebel Free Syrian Army, since December 2012; whereas before the Syrian conflict almost 160.000 civilians lived in the camp, where today there remain only around 18.000;
- C. whereas ISIS/Daesh, in alliance with Jabhat al-Nusra, attacked and mostly seized the Palestinian refugee camp in Yarmouk on 1 April 2015, controlling about 90% of the camp according to the International organisations; whereas on 16 April 2015 ISIS/Daesh

fighters have withdrawn from a large part of the camp, due to its liberation by Palestinian military units, leaving al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra largely in control;

- D. whereas the Syrian government forces have intensified the shelling and aerial bombardment, including barrel bombs, of the camp in response to ISIS/Daesh' takeover of the area; whereas indiscriminate bombing and the destruction of the Yarmouk camp represent crimes against humanity;
 - E. whereas Palestinian refugees remain a particularly vulnerable group in the crisis in Syria; whereas the recent takeover by the terrorist organization ISIS/Daesh and Jabhat al-Nusra of the Yarmouk camps have led to a massive human loss and destruction for which they are responsible of, resulting in a larger deterioration of the humanitarian situation for the residents, and renders it virtually impossible for civilians to leave;
 - F. whereas the vulnerability of civilians in Yarmouk remains of the highest severity; whereas according to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), around 18.000 Palestinian and Syrian civilians in Yarmouk are in need of the most basic humanitarian aid, including 3.500 children;
 - G. whereas the ongoing denial of humanitarian access to the refugees living in the Yarmouk camp by the Syrian regime and other belligerents is against international humanitarian law; whereas the capacity of the UNRWA to sustain life-saving emergency interventions, responding to urgent developments such as the one impacting Yarmouk, is gravely undermined by chronic underfunding for humanitarian interventions inside Syria;
 - H. whereas the UNRWA has been reported of high levels of malnourishment and associated mortality in the camps, as well as constant outbreak of diseases such as Hepatitis A and typhus, which have become endemic;
 - I. whereas the UNRWA has prepositioned stocks of collective shelters, food, mattresses, blankets, and hygiene kits to respond to the most urgent needs as soon as access is granted;
 - J. whereas the UNRWA continues to provide humanitarian assistance to the civilians from Yarmouk who remain displaced in Tadamoun, an area on the north-eastern periphery as well as in every neighbouring area to the east and south-east of Yarmouk – Yalda, Babila and Beit Saham;
 - K. whereas the European Commission releases on 10 April 2015 immediate emergency funding of EUR 2.5 million to UNRWA's operations in Syria, with specific focus on Yarmouk, Idlib, Dara'a and Aleppo, to deliver life-saving assistance to Palestinian refugees through cash and emergency relief items;
1. Condemns the shelling of the Yarmouk camp and all the violations of human rights committed since the beginning of the conflict in Syria; expresses its serious concern about the continued deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in Syria and in particular in the Palestinian refugees Yarmouk Camp; reiterates its strong commitment in

supporting the victims of the Syrian conflict.

2. Reiterates its strong demand for all parties to comply with the international law and to respect their obligations to protect civilians.
3. Calls to implement the humanitarian UNSC Resolutions 2139, 2165 and 2191 throughout the territory of Syria; urges all parties involved in the conflict to allow the UNRWA and other international aid organisations personnel, equipment and transport, unhindered access to the Yarmouk camp to enable immediate and unconditional humanitarian access and provide safe passage for all civilians who wish to leave Yarmouk, in order to alleviate the extreme suffering of the local population.
4. Urges on all parties to cease all attacks against civilians, including shelling and aerial bombardment and calls for the immediate evacuation of Yarmouk camp of armed groups; calls immediately to recognise the camp as neutral regarding the Syrian conflict.
5. Urges the forces that combat terrorist factions ISIS/Daesh and Jabhat al-Nusra, while respecting civil population (Palestinian refugees and Syrian population), to liberate the camp of terrorist organizations;
6. Commends UNRWA for the important work it is doing and expresses its strong commitment to continue working together with UNRWA Commissioner General Pierre Krähenbühl and all other partners to help alleviate the suffering of the people in the greatest need; welcomes the EU emergency funding and calls on the donors to increase their support to the UNRWA's Emergency Appeal.
7. Calls for increased international support for its activities: providing assistance for civilians who are unwilling or unable to leave Yarmouk, assisting those who want to "temporarily relocate" from the camp to do so in accordance with international humanitarian law and assisting Yarmouk residents who have already fled.
8. Calls on the UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura to work with all parties towards the comprehensive implementation of the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012 leading to a genuine political transition that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people and enables them independently and democratically to determine their own future.
9. Calls for the formation of an international fact-finding committee to document all crimes committed against unarmed civilians, including humanitarian and human rights defenders who are exposed to critical threats, from the Palestinian refugee camp of Yarmouk since the beginning of the crisis in December 2012.
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President / High Representative, the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the UN-Arab League Special Envoy to Syria, the Secretary-General of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, and all the parties involved in the conflict in Syria.