



Plenary sitting

1.7.2015

B8-0665/2015

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 123(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on Burundi
(2015/2723(RSP))

**Maria Heubuch, Judith Sargentini, Heidi Hautala, Barbara Lochbihler,
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on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

**European Parliament resolution on Burundi
(2015/2723(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Burundi,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 22 June 2015 on Burundi,
- having regard to the statement of 17 June 2015 by the co-presidents of the EU-ACP Joint Parliamentary Assembly on the situation in Burundi,
- having regard to the statement of 29 June 2015 by the VP/HR spokesperson on Burundi,
- having regard to the declaration of the African Union Summit of 13 June 2015 on Burundi,
- having regard to the declaration of the East African Community Summit of 31 May 2015 on Burundi,
- having regard to the Cotonou Agreement of 23 June 2000 as revised,
- having regard to the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement of 28 August 2000,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
- having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights,
- having regard to the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG),
- having regard to the Burundi roadmap of March 2013,
- having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Burundi has a recent history of civil war, widespread political violence, underdevelopment and poverty;
- B. whereas the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement of 2000 initiated a process of national reconciliation and led to a period of relative stability, notwithstanding moments of widespread political violence;
- C. whereas President Pierre Nkurunziza is currently running for a third presidential term, which is widely judged to be contrary to the Arusha Agreement and the Burundian Constitution;
- D. whereas the announcement of his candidacy and the run-up to the elections went hand

in hand with severe oppression of the Burundian opposition, human rights activists, civil society actors and the media, including the killing of opposition leader Zedi Feruzi;

- E. whereas legislative and local elections took place in Burundi on 29 June 2015 and presidential elections are due to be held on 15 July 2015, both boycotted by the opposition;
- F. whereas polling stations were attacked in June, showing the instability of the situation in which the elections were held;
- G. whereas clashes between police forces and opposition activists have claimed at least 27 lives since 26 April 2015;
- H. whereas armed youth groups linked to the ruling party systematically terrorise and threaten people believed to support the opposition or to be critical towards the government;
- I. whereas around a thousand demonstrators have been arrested and have not been released from prison and other detention centres;
- J. whereas almost 100 000 Burundians have fled to neighbouring countries;
- K. whereas the Great Lakes region has been plagued by political instability and armed conflicts for over twenty years and there is a considerable risk of domestic conflicts spilling over into neighbouring countries;
- L. whereas many critical voices have gone into exile, including Vice-President Gervais Rufyikiri, Speaker of the Burundian Parliament Pie Ntavyohanyuma, Vice-President of the Constitutional Court Sylvere Nimpagaritse and Maggy Barnkitse, the founder of Maison Shalom, Burundi's largest NGO, all of whom received threats after speaking out against President Nkurunziza's third term;
- M. whereas state-run media have resorted to ethnic hate speech, in a region still marked by the Rwandan genocide of 1994;
- N. whereas the United Nations, the African Union (AU) and the East African Community (EAC) have all called for the elections to be postponed, given the current situation of instability and the impossibility of opposition forces campaigning freely;
- O. whereas the EU has withdrawn its election observation mission from Burundi, and whereas the EAC and the AU have refrained from sending missions;
- P. whereas the African Union expressed its readiness to send human rights observers and military experts to Burundi, only to see their access refused by the Burundian authorities;
- Q. whereas EUR 432 million are earmarked for Burundi in the European Development Fund for the period 2014-2020;
- 1. Is extremely concerned by the situation in Burundi, which yet again risks leading to a civil war and further destabilisation of an already strained Great Lakes region;

2. Considers that the elections which took place on 29 June 2015 were not free and fair, that the Burundian authorities systematically hampered the campaign of opposition forces by preventing public demonstrations and threatening opposition politicians and civil society actors, which led to numerous departures into exile, and that the Burundian authorities, led by President Nkurunziza, bluntly violated the Burundian Constitution on repeated occasions while organising the elections;
3. Considers that President Nkurunziza's running for a third term is in clear violation of the Arusha Agreement, which states that the President 'is elected for a five-year term renewable once. No one can serve for more than two terms as president';
4. Condemns the severe oppression against opposition forces in Burundi, the terror spread by the ruling party's Imbonerakure youth militia and the clampdown on the media;
5. Urges the Burundian authorities to ensure that these events are fully investigated, and that those responsible are brought to justice;
6. Calls for the immediate disarmament of the Imbonerakure militia;
7. Considers President Pierre Nkurunziza to be primarily responsible for the serious deterioration in the political situation in Burundi and invites him to engage immediately in a serious dialogue with opposition forces in Burundi in order to find a solution to the current crisis; such a solution must be based on the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement;
8. Calls on President Nkurunziza and the Burundian authorities to immediately postpone the presidential elections;
9. Recalls Burundi's obligations under the Cotonou Agreement to respect human rights, democratic values and the rule of law; recalls that such rights are also enshrined in the Burundian Constitution;
10. Calls on the Burundian authorities to respect and protect the fundamental rights of all Burundians, including freedom of speech and freedom of assembly of opposition supporters, to open up the media without delay, to allow opposition leaders in exile to return to the country, to free all political prisoners unconditionally and to end the harassment of civil society organisations;
11. Urges the Burundian authorities to let the designated AU human rights observers and military experts into the country immediately and to refrain from any act to hamper their work;
12. Welcomes the EEAS's announcement of 29 June 2015 threatening to employ measures against the Burundian authorities under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, and invites the EEAS and the Council to proceed swiftly with their decision and its implementation;
13. Requests that such measures include targeted restrictive measures such as travel bans and freezing of assets against those whose actions might have led, or may lead, to acts of violence and repression and serious human rights violations, and/or may hamper

efforts to reach a political solution within the framework proposed by the AU and the EAC;

14. Invites the EU, the EAC and the AU not to recognise the legitimacy of the government, which will emerge from a flawed electoral process;
15. Welcomes and supports the mediation efforts by the United Nations, the African Union and the East African Community;
16. Is deeply concerned about the continued exodus of refugees to neighbouring countries, reiterates its support for the humanitarian organisations present in the region, which are addressing the refugees' immediate needs, and congratulates the authorities of the host countries for their open and welcoming attitude towards those seeking refuge within their borders;
17. Is deeply concerned by the re-emergence of hate speech in certain media close to the government and holds President Nkurunziza accountable for this and the possible consequences; invites the International Criminal Court prosecutor to monitor those media closely for incitement to ethnic hatred, as well as speeches by political leaders;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the co-presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the governments of the EU Member States, the UN Security Council, the African Union and the governments of the Great Lakes region and of South Africa.