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*Plenary sitting*

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**B8-1258/2015**

24.11.2015

## **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 in Afghanistan, in particular the killings in the province of Zabul

(2015/2968(RSP))

**Bodil Valero, Eva Joly, Heidi Hautala, Maria Heubuch, Igor Šoltes, Davor Škrlec, Jean Lambert**

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

**B8-1258/2015**

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Afghanistan, in particular the killings in the province of Zabul (2015/2968(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous reports and resolutions on Afghanistan, in particular its resolution of 16 December 2010 on a new strategy for Afghanistan, its resolution of 15 December 2011 on budgetary control of EU financial assistance to Afghanistan, its resolution of 15 December 2011 on the situation of women in Afghanistan and Pakistan and its resolution on the EU-Afghanistan cooperation agreement on partnership and development of 13 June 2013,
- having regard to the Council conclusions on Afghanistan of 26 October 2015,
- having regard to the statement of 3 October 2015 of the European Commission deploring the death of several people in the bombing of an MSF-run hospital in Kunduz,
- having regard to recommendations of the Conference on the Implementation and Support of the National Action Plan (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security on 20 September 2015,
- having regard to the EU Local Strategy for Human Rights Defenders in Afghanistan 2014,
- having regard to the United Nations Security Council resolutions on Afghanistan, including the resolution 2189 of 12 December 2014 and the resolution 2210 of 16 March 2015,
- having regard to the 11th November 2015 statement of the UN mission condemning 'senseless murder' of seven civilian hostages in Zabul,
- having regard to the statement of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding the deadly attack on Afghanistan's Human Rights Commission on 26 October 2015,
- having regard to the declaration of 29 September of the UN Human Rights Chief urging all parties to ensure protection of civilians in Kunduz
- having regard to the Report on International Criminal Court Preliminary Examination Activities of 12 November 2015,
- having regard to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its amending and Protocol of 1967

A. Whereas concerns are rising about ethnic and sectarian persecution in Afghanistan after incidents of kidnappings and attacks have been occurring for months against the Hazara which are considered the country's third-largest ethnic group and the only one that is predominantly Shiite;

B. Whereas on 21 November a group of up to 30 Hazaras was attacked at gunpoint while travelling on a Southern highway; whereas at least five other Hazaras traveling on a bus bound for Kabul were saved by other travellers who helped hide their identities, after it was stopped by militants armed with AK-47s and machine guns,

C. Whereas the latest incidents come weeks after seven Hazaras, including a child, were found decapitated in southern Zabul province and the bodies were delivered to provincial elders, sparking a large demonstration in Kabul joint by many Afghan citizens who are concerned about the decreasing security situation after the withdrawal of foreign forces

D. Whereas rival groups of Taliban militants have clashed in Zabul killing at least 80 people recently; whereas militants, mostly Uzbeks, allied to the Islamic State, are equally active in the province and have claimed responsibility for the beheading of the seven, while the Taliban have rejected any implication as well as in the more recent attacks

E. Whereas a report released by a government-appointed commission on 21 November came to the conclusion that corruption and poor leadership among Afghanistan's government and military institutions were to blame for the brief recent take-over of Kunduz by Taliban forces, and that only with support of US Air Force the Taliban were driven out of the city

F. Whereas uncertainty remains over the reasons and responsibilities for the tragic bombing of an MSF hospital by U.S. air strikes on 3 October, despite clear information about the target and in blatant violation of international humanitarian law;

G. Whereas attacks and threats against women in public life and particularly women defenders are on the increase not only by the Taliban but also by government officials or local commanders with the authorities' backing and whereas the administration is often turning a blind eye to this violence - on the contrary - in the cases in which women have reported violence they were often stigmatised or further threatened;

H. Whereas during the short conquest of Kunduz, reports emerged about Taliban fighters using 'hit lists' to systematically track down activists and members of the security forces, raping female relatives and killing family members including children particularly of members of the Afghan local police

1. Expresses its grave concern about the intensifying sectarian conflicts in Afghanistan as well as increased persecution of human rights defenders and women in public life

2. Extends its condolences to the bereaved families particularly of the recent victims of horrific killings in the Hazara community and calls on the Afghan government to do their utmost to bring the perpetrators to justice;

3. Expresses further concern about the increasing force and spread of extremist forces such as the Taliban and militants with links to the Islamic State, calls however on the government to exercise restraint on retaliation and to resist revenge on possible prisoners if progress on the rule of law in Afghanistan should have a chance;
4. Calls on the Afghanistan authorities to do all they can that legitimate concerns about security challenges do not lead to shortcuts in recruitment and vetting of security forces, such as recruiting irregular defence forces. Focus on long-term solutions to protection of civilians that adhere to the rule of law and international best practices;
5. Calls on the Afghan government and the U.S. troops to protect civilians from conflict-related harm with respect to international humanitarian law by developing and implementing clear tactical directives, rules of engagement and other procedures, in particular in relation to the use of mortars, rockets, grenades, artillery, and armed aircraft;
6. Calls on EU Member States and the EU High representative to support a credible, independent international investigation into the attack on the Médecins Sans Frontières hospital in Kunduz, and ensure all forces respect the neutrality of hospitals and other medical services;
7. Urges that Afghan security force personnel implicated in serious human rights violations, including those having command responsibility over abusive forces, are credibly and impartially investigated and disciplined or prosecuted as appropriate;
8. Recalls the landmark Elimination of Violence against Women Law of 2009 and appeals to the authorities to focus more attention and funds on the protection for human rights defenders under threat or attack, particularly women's rights activists, to launch a consciousness-raising effort among local authorities and to establish capacities to provide emergency assistance in the event of imminent danger;
9. Appeals to the government and Parliament to adopt an implementation plan for Afghanistan's 1325 National Action Plan that outlines detailed budgets, timelines, benchmarks, and clear lines of responsibility among government institutions, and includes a requirement that women be full participants in all stages of peace negotiations
10. Urges equally to implement the provisions of the National Action Plan to end torture by initiating investigations and prosecutions based on the UNAMA findings, and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture
11. Welcomes the EU+ Local Strategy on Human Rights Defenders decided in December 2014 as well as additional EU initiatives to support Afghan women and hopes that the various European diplomatic representations put strong impetus on these initiatives in their everyday work in Afghanistan
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Government and Parliament of Afghanistan, the VP/HR of the Common Foreign Policy, Council, and the Commission.