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*Plenary sitting*

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**B8-0056/2016**

14.1.2016

## 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 the EU's priorities for the UN Human Rights Council sessions in 2016 (2015/3035(RSP))

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on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

**European Parliament resolution on the EU's priorities for the UN Human Rights Council sessions in 2016  
(2015/3035(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1953 European Convention on Human Rights,
  - having regard to the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 8 September 2000 (A/Res/55/2) and the resolutions adopted by its General Assembly,
  - having regard to its previous resolutions on the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC),
  - having regard to its urgent resolutions on human rights and democracy,
  - having regard to the upcoming 31st HRC session, to be held from 29 February to 24 March 2016,
  - having regard to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Action Programme of the International Conference of Indigenous Peoples on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and the Beijing Action Platform,
  - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, 60 years after the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the fight against discrimination and for the full realisation of all human rights – social, economic and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights – remains a daily struggle;
- B. whereas economic, social and cultural rights form an integral part of human rights, and respect for them should, at the very least, lead to the full implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular: to end poverty in all its forms everywhere, to eradicate hunger and achieve food security, to ensure healthy lives, to ensure quality education, to promote decent work for all, to reduce inequality, to achieve gender equality, to take urgent action to combat climate change and to promote peace and justice;
- C. whereas, as a result of the financial crisis in the OECD countries, the world is facing the most serious slowdown in economic activity since the 1930s; whereas the WHO has estimated that, as a result of increases in the cost of foodstuffs and energy, more than 100 million people have fallen into poverty; whereas what is commonly known as ‘the financial and economic crisis’ is in fact a global systemic crisis which is affecting all sectors of society and having an impact in all areas: political, social, environmental, food, energy, etc.;

- D. whereas the European Union and its Member States should promote respect for human rights in all their policies, both internal and external, and ensure that they are consistent, in order to enhance and render credible the position of the EU and its Member States in the HRC;
- E. whereas a delegation from Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights will travel to Geneva for the 31st regular session of the HRC, following the practice of previous years for previous HRC sessions and, before that, for those of the UN Commission on Human Rights;
- F. whereas eight Member States now have a seat on the HRC: Germany (up to the year 2018), Belgium (up to 2018), France (up to 2016), Latvia (up to 2017), the Netherlands (up to 2017), Portugal (up to 2017), United Kingdom (up to 2016) and Slovenia (up to 2018); whereas, moreover, at its organisational session on 8 December 2014, the HRC had elected the members of its Bureau for the ninth cycle, from 1 January to 31 December 2015, including the President of the Council, Joachim R  cker (Germany); whereas, as from 1 January 2016, the latter has been replaced by Choi Kyong-lim, of South Korea, and whereas two Vice-Presidents of the Bureau are representatives of EU Member States: Bertrand de Crombrugghe (Belgium) and Janis Karklins (Latvia);
- G. whereas the work done by the Union and its Member States with and in the HRC should be enhanced, not only to promote an indivisible vision of human rights but also to take better account of the HRC recommendations and to implement them in the human rights policy of the Union, both internally and externally;

### *The work and organisation of the HRC*

- 1. Reiterates its call that EU Member States should actively oppose any attempt to undermine the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights, and should actively encourage the HRC to address discrimination on all grounds in the same way;
- 2. Warns against politicising the HRC; emphasises the importance of its country-specific resolutions in addressing serious human rights violations; underlines the importance of evaluating human rights situations in an objective, transparent, non-selective, constructive and non-confrontational manner, on the basis of reliable information obtained by means of interactive dialogue, and in keeping with the concepts of universality and equal treatment for all states; calls on the Member States to contribute actively to the implementation of these agreed principles concerning the HRC;
- 3. Underlines the importance of tackling the root causes of political instability in certain states by means of development policies that are in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other socio-economic, political and cultural measures which can create an environment conducive to preventing the resurgence of conflict, and which aim to eliminate poverty, foster economic, social and cultural development, create institutional and administrative capacities, improve the quality of life of the population and consolidate the rule of law by peaceful means alone;
- 4. Notes that Saudi Arabia is a member of the HRC until 2016; strongly condemns the widespread human rights violations committed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;

condemns in particular the 47 recent executions in the country, including that of Sheikh Nimr Al-Nimr, and is concerned about the increasing tension in the region in response to those executions; calls again for universal abolition of the death penalty and calls for an immediate moratorium on the implementation of death penalties in Saudi Arabia; condemns the fact that Saudi Arabia continues to apply the death penalty for a wide range of situations that are treated as crimes, such as homosexuality, drugs offences, apostasy and witchcraft; urges the Saudi authorities to end all corporal punishment in the country and to incorporate international human rights standards into national legislation; calls, likewise, on the Saudi authorities to immediately release all prisoners of conscience, in particular the blogger Raif Badawi;

5. Welcomes the Annual Reports of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (HCHR); considers vital, in particular, the paragraphs concerning the economic crisis and its impact on peoples, included in the 2015 report: 'Rising inequality and the political, economic and social exclusion of marginalised groups undermined the dignity and rights of people in many States, and drove much of the unrest and most of the conflicts reported. Economic, social and cultural rights, as well as the right to development, were affected by austerity policies that disproportionately burden the poor and marginalised, as did corruption; there were failures to prioritise public services, and refusal to recognise people's right to participate in decisions that shape their lives. Migrants continued to endure profound suffering, with recent events at sea demonstrating a callous disregard for human life and human rights'; calls on the Union and the Member States to make available sufficient human, material and financial resources for operations whose sole purpose is sea rescue; calls on the Union and the Member States to open legal channels for asylum-seekers, in particular by substantially increasing the number of places for resettlement of refugees and granting humanitarian visas, and to develop legal channels for economic immigration;
6. Rejects the use of the concept of 'responsibility to protect', as it infringes international law and does not provide an adequate legal basis to justify the unilateral use of force, in many cases with the aim of bringing about regime change; condemns the role of world policeman which powerful countries, such as the United States, or organisations such as NATO, unilaterally like to claim; condemns also the alleged 'targeted air strikes' and the deployment of foreign ground troops; condemns NATO's attempt to take over the tasks of pacification and stabilisation when they cannot be performed on the basis of a broad consensus at the United Nations General Assembly; expresses its deep concern about the growing number of cases of recruitment of children and young people; recalls the need to protect, in particular, children and women affected by armed conflicts;
7. Condemns once again the widespread use being made – under what are loosely termed 'security' policies – of private military and security undertakings to exercise sovereign powers which only states have the authority to wield, and calls on the European Union and its Member States to step up their efforts to put an end to these practices; considers that, in this field and under the responsibility of states, private military and security undertakings should apply human rights standards, particularly with regard to data protection and respect for privacy; considers that, where public-service tasks are transferred, both states and undertakings should be held responsible for breaches of human rights and humanitarian law committed by the staff of such undertakings;

8. Draws attention, furthermore, to the fact that inadequate regulation of the arms trade, together with a lack of transparency and of proper controls, have caused suffering, fostered armed conflict, instability and corruption, scuppered peace processes and resulted in the overthrow of democratically elected governments and the violation of the rule of law, human rights and international humanitarian law; stresses, therefore, that this issue must be discussed during this session;

#### ***Economic, social and cultural rights***

9. Welcomes the importance that the HRC has attached to promoting and protecting economic and social rights and to the question of the interdependence of human rights; emphasises once again the need to regard economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights as being of equal importance; stresses that high unemployment rates, the increase in poverty and social exclusion, increasingly problematic access to affordable public services in the fields of health, education, housing, transport and culture, and the deteriorating quality of such services constitute major challenges; points out that privatisation and liberalisation have played a part in making some of these entitlements less accessible, that this trend needs to be reversed, and that better wealth distribution, decent wages and high-quality employment are important ways of solving these problems; observes, similarly, that the austerity plans put in place both by EU Member States and in other countries, including under pressure from the EU, have merely aggravated inequalities and poverty;
10. Stresses, furthermore, that the introduction of democracy/human rights clauses in free trade agreements signed by the EU with third countries has been a failure, not only because the clauses have barely been taken into account, but also because such free trade agreements have even led to violations of economic and social rights, the impoverishment of the communities concerned and the monopolisation of resources by multinationals; believes that, in addition to these clauses, new forms of cooperation need to be established to facilitate the economic and social development of third countries on the basis of the needs of their peoples; believes that the United Nations HRC should seek to study and condemn the impact on human rights not only of austerity plans but also of the current free trade agreements;
11. Recalls that in the lead-up to the World Economic Forum which meets every January in Davos, OXFAM stated that in 2016 the combined assets of the world's wealthiest 1% would exceed that of the other 99%; stresses that in 2016 the share of the world's wealth held by the richest 1% will exceed the 50% mark, compared to 48% in 2015 and 44% in 2009; stresses that the crisis has confirmed the dangers inherent in the current economic and political system and has increased social inequalities, which were already extreme, with distribution seriously skewed towards the highest incomes, which are rising at a dizzying rate in comparison with average incomes; considers that the HRC should make the question of global wealth distribution – which is the main impediment to the realisation of economic and social rights – a major priority in its sessions in 2016, and that the delegation of the EU and its Member States should take all requisite steps in pursuit of that aim;
12. Underlines the importance of the report *on the right to decent housing*; calls on the delegation of the EU and its Member States to promote access to high-quality housing

for all, without discrimination, as a fundamental right and to undertake an assessment of the issue of access to housing within the EU (in particular since the beginning of the crisis and the introduction of austerity measures) in order to commit itself to resolving this endemic problem, which has become even worse in recent years; reiterates, moreover, the need to requisition empty homes and for a freeze on evictions as means of tackling the current crisis in a number of Member States;

13. Welcomes equally the report on the right to food; points out that the UN member states should do more to encourage access to essential natural resources and land, and to promote food sovereignty and food security as a means of reducing poverty and unemployment; deplores the fact that a significant number of people do not have, or no longer have, access to certain resources, including basic commodities such as water, due to the hoarding of these resources by companies or private entities, which are supported by the political authorities in the countries concerned, causing – in particular – food shortages and increases in the price of foodstuffs; calls, therefore, on the delegation of the EU and its Member States to take the necessary measures to ensure that the monopolisation of resources, especially land, by European undertakings, in particular, is halted, and to put forward proposals in international and regional forums and conferences (World Bank, WTO, UNCTAD, IMF, OECD, etc.) for recognising basic public goods and including them in a specific UN convention; calls, furthermore, on the EU and its Member States to support UN General Assembly Resolution No 64/292 of 28 July 2010 recognising water as a basic human right, and to do their utmost to have it implemented and made binding;
14. Emphasises the importance of the discussion on ‘the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of states on the full enjoyment of human rights’, and is alarmed by the fact that ‘debt servicing’ is an issue for most countries today and has become a pretext for the introduction of austerity plans which are termed ‘structural adjustment plans’; restates, all the more firmly in the current context of economic and social crisis, its position that the debt not only of third-world countries but also of all countries which face the greatest difficulties (particularly EU Member States) should be written off so as to avoid worsening the crisis and to ensure that people can properly enjoy their economic, social and cultural rights;
15. Considers that, in view of its responsibilities and those of some of its Member States for the economic, social and political situation that led to the popular uprisings in the ‘Arab Spring’ countries, the European Union has a duty to help the institutions in those countries to carry out audits of their debts, and particularly their European debts, in order to ascertain what proportion of those debts was illegitimate and did not benefit the people of those countries, and to do its utmost to ensure that those debts are swiftly written off; urges the EU and its Member States once more to make further significant efforts to facilitate the return of assets misappropriated by the former regimes to the people of Arab Spring countries within a reasonable timeframe; is concerned that the partnership guidelines seem to follow the same lines as previous discussions;

### *Civil and political rights*

16. Calls on all states to combat torture, including in EU Member States; calls on the

delegation of the EU and its Member States to include in the debate on torture and other inhuman and degrading punishments and treatments the question of banning trade in products which can be used for purposes of torture, both inside and outside the EU;

17. Calls on the delegation of the EU and its Member States to reaffirm their opposition to the death penalty and their advocacy of its universal abolition and of an immediate moratorium in those countries where it is still on the statute book; is concerned that a number of countries that had suspended capital punishment are resuming executions or re-establishing the death penalty on the pretext of the fight against terrorism and as part of the fight against drug trafficking;
18. Stresses the need to debate at this session of the HRC the issue of freedom of association and the struggle against all forms of repression, including assassinations of trade unionists, political and civil-society activists, artists and human rights defenders;
19. Takes note of the importance attached at the 31<sup>st</sup> session to *freedom of religion or belief* and recalls that this involves both the right to believe and not to believe and to promote religious beliefs and to change them; re-emphasises its attachment to secularism, i.e. the strict separation of political and religious authority, as a fundamental characteristic of certain states and cultures, implying a rejection of all religious interference in the functions of government and of all political interference in religious affairs other than for purposes of upholding the rules on security and public order (including respect for others' freedom) and guarantees that everyone (whether believer, agnostic or atheist) can enjoy to an equal degree freedom of conscience and the right to express their beliefs publicly;

### ***Fighting terrorism and respecting fundamental rights***

20. Notes the importance given to the link between terrorism and human rights at the 31<sup>st</sup> session; condemns once more the attacks by the organisation styled '*the Islamic state*' and all other terrorist organisations and expresses its most sincere condolences to the victims of these crimes and their families; stresses that the fight against terrorism must not under any circumstances serve as a pretext for restricting personal freedoms and fundamental rights; believes that the '*warlike*' response by the Western countries – above all the EU and the US – far from reducing the terrorist threat only aggravates the spiral of violence; reiterates that an effective plan to fight against terrorism cannot be implemented until such time as we put a stop to the funding of terrorist organisations, including by suspending all trade or partnerships agreements with countries supporting these organisations; emphasises, furthermore, the importance of strengthening public intelligence, security and justice services, but also the need to implement prevention programmes and establish centres funded by governments to detect at an early stage the recruitment methods of terrorist sects, put an end to the recruitment channels and allow the rehabilitation of persons recruited by these organisations; recalls that the right to safety and security is fundamental and condemns any public policy seeking to discriminate against part of the population on the basis of its origin or religion;
21. Regards the agenda item on '*protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism*' as extremely important; is greatly concerned about the

deterioration, with regard to human rights and civil liberties, which is being brought about under the pretext of fighting terrorism and, increasingly, serious crime, without these concepts being clearly defined, and which is also happening in the EU or by means of specific agreements with certain states where human rights standards are not applied; is particularly concerned in this field about the violation of standards relating to data protection and respect for privacy;

22. Considers particularly important the report on the *Right to Privacy in the Digital Age*; deplores the fact that information and communication technologies and services, including European technologies and services, are used in third countries to violate human rights, including through censorship and mass surveillance; condemns, likewise, the mass spying on millions of people by the US National Security Agency; expresses its concern at the spread of monitoring and filtering technologies, which represent a growing threat to human rights activists and often violate the right to privacy; calls for these concerns to be taken into account when this item is discussed at the session;
23. Criticises the fact that the international community has still not entered into negotiations for the conclusion of an international agreement on the protection of personal data, for which Convention 108 of the Council of Europe could serve as a model; calls on the EU and Member State delegation to work to devise such a framework, in collaboration with their international counterparts;
24. Emphasises the importance of continuing the work on global practices relating to secret detentions in the context of countering terrorism; calls on the EU Member States to follow up the existing reports effectively, in line with Parliament's previous positions on the issue, especially its resolutions on the use of European countries by the CIA for the transportation, illegal detention and torture of prisoners; condemns likewise the systematic use of torture by the United States at the Guantanamo military base; reiterates the illegal nature of this base; calls for its immediate closure and for the whole of Cuba's territory to be returned to that country;

### ***The fight against discrimination in all its forms***

25. Considers that the attention given in 2016 to increasing equality and tackling discrimination – whether racial, against minorities or based on gender, sexual orientation or identity or disability – is of great importance; stresses that in this area, too, the EU and the Member States must implement the recommendations of the HCHR; stresses in particular the importance, during this 31<sup>st</sup> session, of the discussion panel on the incompatibility of democracy and racism;
26. Welcomes the importance assigned to the issue of racism and discrimination at the 2016 sessions of the HRC; condemns once again racist, anti-Semitic, homophobic and xenophobic violence and violence against migrants, which have reached alarming levels in some Member States, in the absence of firm action on the part of the authorities; expresses alarm at the upsurge in hate speech and stigmatising rhetoric directed against minorities and at the rise of groups of persons who are exerting increasing influence in the media and in political movements and parties which exercise government responsibility in some Member States, influence which has led, in particular, to the



enactment of restrictive legislation;

27. Considers fundamental, likewise, the attention to be devoted, during the 32<sup>nd</sup> session of the HRC (from 13 June to 1 July 2016), to the issue of discrimination against women and the elimination of all forms of violence against women; stresses that universal access to health and reproductive health care must remain a political priority, including free access to sex education, contraception methods and the right to abortion; stresses that eradicating violence against women and girls and combating sexual exploitation and trafficking in human beings must be a priority and have the objective of bringing about equality between women and men; calls therefore on the HRC and the international community to implement the ICPD+20, Beijing +20 and Rio +20 processes; stresses, likewise, that it is important for EU Member States to apply the recommendation made by the HRC in 2002 concerning international protection in relation to persecution on grounds of sex, particularly in the context of immigration policies;
28. Welcomes the importance attached, at the 31<sup>st</sup> session of the HRC, to children's rights and the intention, following the adoption of Resolution 25/6, to monitor closely the issues of the trafficking and sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;
29. Calls on the EU and its Member States to work, as a priority, towards practical action by the HRC to put an end to human rights violations affecting civilians, particularly women and children, in wars and situations of violent conflict; calls for priority action to be taken, in particular, to halt the recruitment of child soldiers and to protect them;
30. Criticises the fact that the HRC's conferences in 2016 will not address issues relating to the rights of LGBTI persons; condemns the violence and discrimination directed against LGBTI persons around the world; condemns in particular the enforced sterilisation of transgender persons, which persists in certain states, including states within the EU, and calls for an immediate end to this violation of human rights; urges all countries in the world to consider ways of bringing family law into line with changes in the way families live and are structured today, including by granting persons of the same sex the right to marry and adopt children; emphasises that lesbians often suffer multiple discrimination (as both women and lesbians) and that measures to foster equality for LGBTI persons must go hand in hand with measures to bring about equality for women and girls, in order to achieve equality and non-discrimination; expresses concern at the recent increase in the prevalence of laws, practices and acts of violence directed against persons on the basis of their sexual orientation and their sex; reaffirms its support for the ongoing work of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in particular through declarations, reports and the 'Freedom and Equality' campaign, to ensure that LGBTI persons can exercise all their human rights; urges the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner to continue to combat discriminatory laws and practices;

### ***Human rights and migration***

31. Condemns the impact of the policies of externalisation of the borders of the EU, which entail increased risks for persons seeking to travel to Europe in search of security and which are bringing about a rise in the number of deaths at sea en route for Europe;

deplores, in this context, the death or disappearance, to date, of more than 25 000 people in the Mediterranean Sea, including at least 3 771 in 2015, making Europe the most dangerous migration route in the world, according to the International Organisation for Migration;

32. Stresses the need for the EU to base any migration policy, including border control policy, on a coherent and harmonised approach based on human rights, in accordance with international commitments; condemns, accordingly, the ‘Khartoum process’, which entails cooperation with, in particular, the Eritrean and Sudanese regimes to ‘manage migration’; reiterates its call on the EU Member States to implement democracy and human rights clauses in all international agreements, of whatever nature, and to guarantee respect for human rights in their own internal and external policies, without which the position of the EU in the HRC and in any other international forum dealing with human rights would be weakened;
33. Calls on the EU delegation and the EU Member States to call upon the international community to develop legal and safe channels for migrants and asylum-seekers, in particular by granting humanitarian visas and places for resettlement; calls on the EU Member States to act accordingly as a matter of urgency;

#### ***Human rights and the environment***

34. Considers, similarly, that information on human rights and the environment is extremely important and that it is intrinsically related to the right of peoples to their natural resources, to land and to a sustainable environmental system; considers therefore that universal ratification and implementation of the Kyoto process, and of other international conventions enabling people actually to exercise these rights, is of fundamental importance;
35. Endorses the opinion of the High Commissioner for Human Rights comparing climate change caused by human activity to the action of a pyromaniac setting fire to his own house; considers that the agreements reached at COP21 in Paris remain insufficient to halt climate change and guarantee the social and environmental rights of peoples; calls on the EU delegation and the representatives of the Member States to support, within the HRC, the proposal to set up an international environmental justice tribunal under the aegis of the United Nations and to seek the establishment of a binding legal instrument to penalise the most polluting states and undertakings;
36. Points out that 17.5 million people were displaced in 2014 as a result of climate-related disasters; points out that these displacements chiefly affect regions in the South, which are those most exposed to climate change impacts; points out that 85% of these displacements occur in developing countries, primarily within one country or within parts of countries; points out that under the Millennium Development Goals the EU Member States have committed themselves to earmarking 0.7% of GNI for development aid financing; regrets that many EU Member States have not met the target of devoting 0.7% of GNI to it, and that some have reduced the percentage that they spend on development aid; deplores the fact that Member States are cutting back their involvement in food aid programmes; calls on the EU and its Member States to provide

assistance in the form of grants rather than loans, so as not to increase the debt burden; urges that development aid should not be used for the purpose of closing or controlling borders or repatriating migrants;

37. Emphasises that the UN puts the number of persons who will be displaced by the impact of climate change between now and 2050 at 200 million; stresses the need for a global approach designed to resolve problems linked to climate change, poverty, the use of and access to resources and the fight against land and resource grabbing by multinationals, in order to foster development and public access to basic goods, rights and services; calls on the EU delegation to the HRC and the representatives of the Member States to participate actively in the debate on the term 'climate refugee', in order to formulate a legally binding definition for adoption under international law;

***The right of self-determination of peoples and human rights situations requiring the attention of the Council***

38. Stresses once again the inalienable right of peoples to self-determination and to choose their own political, economic and social policies without external interference; calls on the EU and its Member States, on the occasion of the 2016 sessions of the HRC, resolutely to further that right rather than continuing to pursue the current policies; rejects, furthermore, the imposition of sanctions by the EU and the United States on third countries with the aim of protecting their geopolitical and economic interests regardless of the humanitarian situation;
39. Expresses once again its concern about the deterioration, in various forms and at various levels throughout the world, including in the EU, of the situation of human rights defenders, activists, organisations and institutions and that of journalists;
40. Stresses the importance of respect for the fundamental rights of indigenous and tribal peoples as defined in ILO Convention 169;
41. Is extremely concerned about the deterioration in the humanitarian and security situation in Syria due to the occupation of a large part of the territory by the so-called 'Islamic State' organisation; once again strongly condemns the systematic human rights violations committed by terrorist organisations; is also particularly concerned about the violations of human rights committed by the Syrian regime, particularly breaches of freedom of expression, arbitrary detention and repression against human rights defenders; stresses that the conflict has been exacerbated by arms trading and arms supplies; strongly condemns the various Western interventions of recent years, which have had serious consequences in terms of the radicalisation of individuals, especially in the Middle East and southern neighbourhood countries; condemns in the strongest terms the direct or indirect support that the United States, the EU, NATO and the Gulf monarchies have given, and continue to give, to terrorist groups; welcomes the efforts to promote political dialogue under the aegis of the UN to overcome the political crisis in the country and stresses that, in order to be effective, the dialogue must also involve members of the peaceful opposition to the Syrian regime;
42. Notes that the human rights situation in Iran continues to give cause for concern; condemns the repression directed against peaceful demonstrators and dissidents

(including students, academics and human rights defenders), women's rights activists, lawyers, journalists, bloggers and members of religious orders, which is commonplace there; stresses that the international community has a fundamentally important role to play in safeguarding peace; expresses its concern about the number of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, the persistently high number of executions, including executions of minors, torture, unjust trials and the exorbitant sums demanded in bail, as well as the serious restrictions of freedom of information, expression, assembly, religion, education and movement;

43. Welcomes the holding of free elections in Myanmar/Burma on 8 November 2015, which constituted a major step towards the establishment of democracy in the country; remains concerned, however, about the constitutional framework for those elections, which reserved 25% of seats in Parliament for military personnel; acknowledges the progress made to date with regard to human rights, while stressing a certain number of shortcomings which remain, particularly as regards the rights of minorities and freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly; condemns the discrimination against the Rohingya, which is exacerbated by the fact that that community has no legal status, and by the upsurge in hate speech against non-Buddhists; calls for in-depth, transparent and independent inquiries into all the allegations of human rights violations against the Rohingya, and considers that the four laws adopted by the Parliament in 2015 for the purpose of 'protecting race and religion' incorporate discriminatory aspects, particularly regarding gender; reiterates its call for the Office of the HCHR to be authorised to establish a representation in the country;
44. Expresses its deep concern at the revelations contained in the reports of the Office of the HCHR on the human rights situation in Ukraine; condemns the continuing violation of international law and human rights by all parties to the conflict in the war in the East of the country, including enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, torture and mistreatment of persons suspected of intrusion in breach of territorial integrity, terrorism or support for the 'Donetsk People's Republic' and the 'Lugansk People's Republic'; expresses its deep concern about the fact that police and security officers enjoy a high degree of impunity; strongly condemns the ban imposed on the Communist Party of Ukraine by the Administrative Court in Kiev District; expresses its strong concern about the assaults on freedom of expression and the attacks on democratic political parties in Ukraine; calls on the delegation of the EU to the HRC and on the representatives of the Member States to strongly condemn this serious attack on democracy in the country; expresses its concern about the social situation in Ukraine, where, according to the country's Ministry of Social Policy, between 20% and 25% of Ukrainian households have fallen into poverty as a result of the current policies of the government;
45. Is deeply concerned by the current conflict in South Sudan; calls for an immediate ceasefire between the two parties to the conflict, and expresses its support for impartial mediation with a view to securing an agreement as soon as possible; calls for more humanitarian aid to be supplied to the civilians who are caught in the fighting or who are fleeing the region; calls on the EU and its Member States to respect the principle of non-refoulement by opening their borders to refugees fleeing the crisis afflicting South Sudan; calls, similarly, for international commitment to end the supply of arms and military equipment to South Sudan and to end arms exports in the region;

46. Is greatly concerned by the crisis which has gripped the Central African Republic (CAR) since 2003; reiterates its condolences to the families of the victims of the clashes; reiterates its support for the independence, unity and territorial integrity of the CAR; reiterates its support for the ceasefire which resulted from the Brazzaville Agreement, initiation of the ‘disarmament, demobilisation, reconciliation’ (DDR) process, the coming pluralist, transparent legislative and presidential elections, and specific action to protect human rights; recalls the importance of peoples’ right to self-determination without outside interference; calls for the swift withdrawal of French troops from the CAR and the closure of permanent foreign military bases in the country; calls for stronger checks on UN forces and an in-depth, impartial and transparent enquiry into allegations of abuse or crimes committed; is particularly concerned at the vague notions of transnational companies in the CAR, especially those engaged in the extraction of precious stones and the harvesting of timber; recalls the inalienable right of peoples to their natural resources and the obligation of companies to submit to international law; underlines the importance for the EU and its Member States to commit fully – particularly in the Human Rights Council (HRC) – to the establishment by the UN of a binding instrument to be used against companies which fail to respect human rights;
47. Welcomes the special attention devoted to Haiti at this 31<sup>st</sup> session of the Human Rights Council; deplores the humanitarian situation in the country, which remains appalling, and the fact that the damage caused by the hurricanes of 2010 has still not been repaired; stresses that the extreme poverty in the country has intensified the devastating impact of natural disasters, causing the most serious humanitarian crisis in decades; condemns once again the debt and the colossal cost of servicing it imposed on the country by France and the international institutions (first and foremost the International Monetary Fund), which is responsible for its underdevelopment; applauds the international, and primarily regional, aid effort to assist Haiti, involving the sending by Cuba of doctors and specialist medical personnel who have treated tens of thousands of people for cholera, the financial support provided through the ALBA Humanitarian Fund for Haiti, the ongoing provision of energy supplies through Petrocaribe and the drafting of a special plan for the direct supply of fuel for humanitarian assistance vehicles, agricultural initiatives to supply food and production plans and the reforestation campaign; calls for an inquiry into the allegations that some aid payments, in particular from the EU, never reached Haiti and into the effectiveness of the aid distribution network; calls, further, for an assessment of the effectiveness of the aid payments actually made;
48. Underlines the importance of the discussions in the HRC on the crisis in Burundi; expresses its great concern at the situation in Burundi and emphasises that it may have disastrous consequences for the region as a whole; calls for the Pact for Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region and the Protocol on Non-Aggression and Mutual Defence to be observed; takes the view that the current crisis can be resolved only by means of national and regional political dialogue and must not, under any circumstances, serve as a pretext for further military intervention in the region; takes the view that the problems in Burundi can be resolved only by giving all citizens equal rights, sorting out disputes over fertile farmland, tackling unemployment and poverty, fighting corruption, poverty, inequality and discrimination and promoting

social, political and economic reforms to create a free, democratic and stable state;

49. Criticises the fact that the situation in Latin America, in particular Honduras and Paraguay, has not been included in this discussion; calls for proper monitoring of the human rights situation in Honduras and Paraguay since the coups d'état, and for an all-out effort to re-establish democracy and the rule of law there; calls on the delegation of the EU and the Member States to seek a condemnation of the coups d'état, not to recognise the 'de facto' governments, and to demand that the guilty parties be brought to trial; calls, likewise, for an inquiry into the attempted coups d'état in other Latin American countries such as Ecuador and Venezuela and for all those responsible, including third countries, to be identified;
50. Criticises, likewise, the failure to discuss the issue of human rights in Mexico at this session, despite the fact that disappearances and extra-judicial killings, including murders of large numbers of women, are increasing in number and that the authorities have been shown to be responsible; is very concerned about the impunity prevalent in Mexico, where over 22 000 people have disappeared – more than half of them in recent years – but where 98% of crimes remain unpunished; condemns the criminalisation and the repression of students, journalists, social activists, peasant leaders and trade unionists in Mexico, including the disappearances and assassinations; calls for the EU and Member State delegations at the 31<sup>st</sup> session of the HRC to endorse the calls from NGOs for the office of the International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor and the Hague tribunal to look into crimes committed in Mexico and, where appropriate, to open an international investigation;
51. Regrets, similarly, that the issue of human rights in Turkey has not been placed on the agenda; condemns in particular the deterioration in the democratic situation in that country and the rise in repression of democrats, elected office-holders and political activists, trade unionists, journalists, human rights defenders and artists; notes that the repression is directed in particular against the Kurds, with the Turkish Government leading a full-scale armed offensive against not only the politicians concerned but also against the civilian population; calls on the delegation of the EU to ensure that this subject is raised at the 31<sup>st</sup> session of the HRC and that explicit support is lent to the resumption of discussions on the peace process;
52. Underlines the importance of dealing with the issue of Djibouti, where there is increasing repression of political and civil-society activists and where over 300 arbitrary arrests were made between October and December 2015, at one of the sessions of the HRC in 2016; calls on the delegation of the EU and its Member States to demand an immediate halt to repression and the release of all political prisoners, in particular the oldest, Mohamed Ahmed (known as Jabha), and Omar Ali Ewado, founder member of the Djiboutian League of Human Rights, and calls for an international enquiry, under the aegis of the United Nations, into the massacres at Buldhuqo (December 2015) and Arhiba (December 1991) and other large-scale crimes in the country with the aim of apprehending and putting on trial those responsible;
53. Welcomes the particular attention devoted by the HRC in recent years to the human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories, particularly the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people and the establishment of an independent

and viable state within the 1967 borders; urges the delegation of the EU to condemn all forms of colonialism, particularly in Palestine, in both the West Bank and East Jerusalem, where it is constantly on the rise; condemns, similarly, the violent attacks on the Palestinian people carried out by settlers, particularly in Hebron, and the plans for the forced displacement of the Bedouin;

54. Recalls the importance of the United Nations report on the human rights situation in the Palestinian territories deploring the fact that 'Israel's policies in the West Bank and Gaza Strip appear to amount to apartheid due to its systematic oppression of the Palestinian people and de facto expropriation of their land'; denounces the violation by Israeli forces of the fundamental rights of Palestinians and the ethnic cleansing in East Jerusalem, with the Israeli authorities attempting to 'Judaize' the city of Jerusalem in order to take it for themselves; deplores the fact that Israel consistently prevented the UN special rapporteur from having access to the occupied Palestinian territories, which prompted him to resign in January 2016, and calls on the delegation of the EU to the HRC and on the Member States' representations to put pressure on the Israeli authorities to enable the UN mandate to be carried out;
55. Denounces the situation of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons; calls on the State of Israel to put an immediate end to the practice of mass imprisonment, which increased again in 2015, with over 6 000 people imprisoned, many of whom are minors; equally condemns the extra-judiciary executions, administrative detentions, transfer of prisoners outside the occupied territories (thereby depriving them of family visits), mistreatment, torture and forced feeding of prisoners and denial of appropriate and timely medical treatment, all of which constitute flagrant breaches of international law; reiterates its condemnation of all forms of torture and mistreatment; calls on Israel to provide immediate guarantees of compliance with the United Nations Convention against Torture, to which it is party; condemns the detention and mistreatment of children and calls for the immediate release of women and children who are being held in prison; condemns the manner in which children are treated by Israeli courts; also calls for the immediate release of jailed Palestinian parliamentarians, in particular Khalida Jarrar and Marouane Barghouti;
56. Is extremely concerned at the restrictions on civil and political freedom in Israel and in particular at the various laws concerning NGOs which restrict freedom of association, assembly and organisation; also denounces the heightened discrimination against minorities in the country, particularly the 'Arab' minority;
57. Criticises the fact that the issue of Western Sahara has not been placed on the agenda for the 2016 sessions of the HRC; emphasises once again that the Western Sahara conflict is a decolonisation issue and that, under international law, the Kingdom of Morocco has no sovereignty over Western Sahara and is regarded as the occupying power; condemns the persistent violation of the fundamental rights of the Sahrawi people; calls for the protection of the fundamental rights of the people of Western Sahara, including freedom of association, freedom of expression and the right to demonstrate; calls for the immediate release of all Sahrawi political prisoners and, as a matter of urgency, of the members of the Gdeim Izik group condemned by the Moroccan military tribunal; repeats its call to Spain to grant political asylum to the young Sahrawi Hassana Aalia, sentenced by a court to life imprisonment; stresses the

need for international monitoring of the human rights situation in Western Sahara; calls on Morocco and the Polisario Front to continue the negotiations which are designed to lead to a peaceful and lasting solution to the Western Sahara conflict, and reaffirms the right of the Sahrawi people to self-determination, which must be decided by a democratic referendum held in accordance with United Nations Resolutions 34/37 and 35/19;

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58. Mandates its delegation to the 31<sup>st</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> sessions of the UNHRC to voice the concerns expressed in this resolution; invites it to report to the Human Rights sub-committee on completion of its mission and deems it appropriate to continue sending a European Parliament delegation to the relevant sessions of the HRC;
59. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Security Council, the UN Secretary-General, the President of the UN General Assembly, the President of the UN Human Rights Council, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the EU-UN Working Group established by the Committee on Foreign Affairs.