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*Plenary sitting*

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**B8-0149/2016**

27.1.2016

## 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 systematic mass murder of religious minorities by ISIS  
(2016/2529(RSP))

**Bodil Valero, Alyn Smith, Bronis Ropė, Igor Šoltes**  
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

**European Parliament resolution on the systematic mass murder of religious minorities by ISIS  
(2016/2529(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Iraq, Syria, Libya and Egypt, in particular those of 10 October 2013 on recent cases of violence and persecution against Christians, notably in Maaloula (Syria) and Peshawar (Pakistan) and the case of Pastor Saeed Abedini (Iran)<sup>1</sup>, of 18 September 2014 on the situation in Iraq and Syria, and the IS offensive, including the persecution of minorities<sup>2</sup>, of 27 November 2014 on Iraq: kidnapping and mistreatment of women<sup>3</sup>, of 12 February 2015 on the humanitarian crisis in Iraq and Syria, in particular in the IS context<sup>4</sup>, of 12 March 2015 on recent attacks and abductions by ISIS/Daesh in the Middle East, notably of Assyrians<sup>5</sup>, and of 30 April 2015 on the destruction of cultural sites perpetrated by ISIS/Daesh<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 16 March 2015 on the EU Regional Strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the ISIL/Daesh threat, of 20 October 2014 on the ISIL/Daesh crisis in Syria and Iraq, of 30 August 2014 on Iraq and Syria, of 14 April 2014 and 12 October 2015 on Syria, and of 15 August 2014 on Iraq,
- having regard to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) on the situation in Syria and Iraq,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines on international humanitarian law, on human rights defenders and on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief,
- having regard to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the additional protocols thereto,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide,
- having regard to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,
- having regard to the Amnesty International report of 20 January 2016 entitled ‘Banished and dispossessed: Forced displacement and deliberate destruction in northern Iraq’,
- having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2013)0422.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2014)0027.

<sup>3</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2014)0066.

<sup>4</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2015)0040.

<sup>5</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2015)0071.

<sup>6</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2015)0179.

- A. whereas the so-called ISIL/Daesh continues to target ethnic and religious groups in Iraq and Syria, including Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrians, Faili Kurds, Kaka'ees, Sabaeans, Shabaks, Shi'as Arabs, Turkmens and Yezidis, intentionally subjecting them to a range of severe abuses and violations of international human rights law and humanitarian law, some of which, according to UN experts, constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity and may also amount to genocide;
- B. whereas these systematic and grave acts against specific ethnic and religious groups include mass executions, ethnic cleansing, targeted killings, forced conversions to Islam, abductions, forcible displacements, stoning and amputation, enforced disappearance, torture, destruction of religious and cultural heritage sites and trafficking in cultural property; whereas the United Nations has also reported systematic sexual and physical violence and mass enslavement of women and children and recruitment of children for suicide bombings;
- C. whereas IS so far has deliberately and systematically targeted and destroyed more than 100 religious and historic sites, including churches, mosques, monuments, shrines, and other places of worship, tombs and cemeteries, as well as archaeological and cultural heritage sites in Syria and Iraq;
- D. whereas, according to the United Nations, these acts appear to be part of a systematic or widespread policy aimed at suppressing, permanently expelling or destroying these communities within areas under Daesh control;
- E. whereas the report of 16 June 2015 of the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism states that 'there is evidence that ISIL has committed serious violations of international law, including genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and serious violations of human rights law' (paragraph 11);
- F. whereas the egregious violence and abuses committed by Daesh affect not only religious minorities but also other groups and individuals, such as Sunni Muslims, LGBTI persons, atheists and anyone who does not conform to the reactionary and extremist ideology of IS;
- G. whereas Daesh has engaged in the systematic murder of all opposition voices regardless of their religious affiliation, for example by executing numerous Sunni journalists and Sunni imams opposing Daesh, executing 700 Sunni tribesmen in three days in August 2014 in Der Ezzor, and hundreds of Sunni civilians as recently as 16 January 2016;
- H. whereas war crimes and other violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law by the other conflicting parties in the region, including by the Assad regime, continue to be reported on a daily basis and on a massive scale;
- I. whereas religious and ethnic minorities are also targeted by the Assad regime and non-state armed groups other than Daesh, notably Jabhat al Nusra in Syria and Shia militias in Iraq;
- J. whereas, in some instances, the motivations for attacks against religious and ethnic communities result from perpetrators conflating a community's ethnic and/or religious

backgrounds and its perceived political loyalties;

- K. whereas, under international law, all individuals have the right to live according to their conscience and to freely hold and change religious and non-religious beliefs; whereas political and religious leaders have a duty at all levels to combat extremism and to promote mutual respect among individuals and religious groups;
- L. whereas, so far, only nine Member States have ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, namely Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain;
1. Strongly condemns the multiple and grave violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed by all parties involved in the ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Syria;
  2. Recalls its firm condemnation of the massive and widespread atrocities committed by Daesh, including its deliberate targeting of religious and ethnic communities in areas under its control;
  3. Denounces in the strongest terms the destruction of religious and cultural sites and artefacts by Daesh, which constitutes an attack against the cultural heritage of all inhabitants of Syria and Iraq and of humanity at large; calls on all states to step up their criminal investigations and judicial cooperation with a view to identifying all groups responsible for illicit trafficking in cultural goods and for damaging or destroying cultural heritage that belongs to all of humanity in Syria, Iraq and the broader Middle East and North African regions;
  4. Calls on the warring parties in the region to immediately cease all attacks against civilians, to release all detainees in arbitrary detention and to uphold the human rights of all, irrespective of faith, ethnicity or political affiliation;
  5. Condemns the escalation in rhetoric by influential religious leaders, throughout the Middle East and beyond, including in Russia, in relation to the conflict in Syria, which fans the flames of hatred and increases the risk of violence against religious communities; calls on religious leaders around the world to refrain from any form of advocacy of religious hatred and incitement to violence;
  6. Recognises, supports and demands respect by all for the inalienable right of all ethnic and religious minorities, and others, living in Iraq and Syria, to continue to live in their historical and traditional homelands in dignity, equality and safety, and to be able to fully practise their religion freely without being subject to any kind of coercion, violence or discrimination; stresses the need to include their genuine representatives in a process to determine the political future of their homelands in Iraq and Syria;
  7. Recognises that the violence of Daesh is one among many factors contributing to the humanitarian crisis in Syria, Iraq and the wider region; calls on the EU and its Member States, in this connection, to actively contribute and take practical and political measures, notably through the UN framework, to find a solution to these conflicts in order to alleviate the suffering and persecution of millions of people, from all religious and ethnic groups;

8. Reaffirms its full and active support for the work of UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura in launching negotiations in Geneva between all Syrian parties in the near future; insists on the importance of duly taking into account the protection of minorities in any discussion on a political transition and the future of Syria; insists, therefore, that the representatives of the Syrian-based movements should be included in the peace talks;
9. Recalls that Daesh represents first and foremost the consequence rather than the cause of the current convulsion which is engulfing the Middle East and beyond; recalls that Daesh has emerged from a bedrock of protracted human rights violations and impunity, crony capitalism, pervasive corruption, sectarianism, marginalisation and discrimination against entire groups, including Arab Sunnis, as well as a long history of external manipulation and intervention by regional and Western actors; believes, therefore, that any effective response by the international community to the nefarious acts and nature of Daesh requires a collected, inclusive and strategic plan of action, couched in international legality;
10. Stresses that the emergence of Daesh as a major regional actor and as the prime focus of international attention since the summer of 2014 should not obfuscate the responsibility of other players in the current humanitarian catastrophe, including first and foremost the Assad regime, but also the former Iraqi Government and the leadership of other local militias and non-jihadist warring parties, including in Libya;
11. Reiterates its condemnation, in the harshest terms, of the crimes perpetrated by the Assad regime against its population, including the use of chemical weapons, incendiary weapons, cluster bombs, barrel bombs and ongoing sieges against thousands of civilians across Syria;
12. Underlines the importance of holding accountable, in accordance with international standards, all parties in Syria and Iraq responsible for violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes; reiterates its call for the referral of the situation in Syria and Iraq to the International Criminal Court and supports all initiatives in this direction;
13. Expresses its most profound concern that, according to several UN Special Rapporteurs, the crimes committed by Daesh against religious minorities in Syria may amount to genocide; insists therefore on the historic responsibility of the international community to ensure that these crimes are determined by an authoritative jurisdiction;
14. Calls on the Kurdish Regional Government in northern Iraq to investigate the allegations of serious human rights violations performed by its military wing, the Peshmerga, and to prosecute those who have been responsible for these alleged crimes;
15. Remains alarmed that the humanitarian needs of the population in Iraq, Syria and Libya continue to outpace the international response; urges all donors, including the EU and its Member States, to fulfil their promises and to deliver assistance in a swift manner, including through local civil society groups and minority aid organisations in order to best reach out to the vulnerable groups in need; calls on Turkey and the Kurdish Regional Government to immediately open their borders to Northern Syria and lift the restrictions on humanitarian aid, reconstruction, media and political and civil society

exchanges;

16. Recognises that the ongoing persecution of religious and ethnic groups in the Middle East is a factor that contributes to mass migration and internal displacement; calls on the Member States to heed the plea of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees for a much stronger commitment to responsibility-sharing, allowing refugees fleeing the war zones, including due to persecution on religious or ethnic grounds, to find protection beyond the immediate neighbouring region through resettlement, humanitarian admission schemes, simplified family reunification or more flexible visa regulations; underlines the particular need to address the situation of those affected by specific vulnerabilities, such as serious medical needs and disability, and those targeted on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender;
17. Urges all the Member States to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance as a matter of priority; calls on the European External Action Service and the Member States to promote the universal ratification and the implementation of this very important human rights instrument and to support the work of the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances, established under this Convention;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the United Nations Human Rights Council and all the parties involved in the conflict in Syria, Iraq and Libya.