



Plenary sitting

B8-0151/2016

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 humanitarian situation in Yemen
(2016/2515(RSP))

Javier Couso Permuy, Sabine Lösing, Ángela Vallina, Neoklis Sylikiotis, Takis Hadjigeorgiou, Fabio De Masi, Paloma López Bermejo, Marie-Christine Vergiat, Malin Björk, Tania González Peñas, Miguel Urbán Crespo, Lola Sánchez Caldentey, Xabier Benito Ziluaga, Estefanía Torres Martínez

on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

**European Parliament resolution on the humanitarian situation in Yemen
(2016/2515(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the statements on Yemen made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, and by the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed,
 - having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on Yemen and to the statements by the Vice-President / High Representative on Yemen, in particular those of 26 October 2015 and 15 December 2015,
 - having regard to the Joint Statements by the Vice-President / High Representative and the Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management of 3 July 2015 on the crisis in Yemen and of 10 January 2016 on the attack on a Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) health centre in Yemen,
 - having regard to the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 2014 (2011), 2051 (2012), 2140 (2014), 2201 (2015), 2204 (2015) and 2216 (2015),
 - having regard to the speeches delivered at the 7596th Meeting of the United Nations Security Council on the situation in the Middle East of 22 December 2015,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Yemen, in particular that of 9 July 2015¹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 27 February 2014 on the use of armed drones²,
 - having regard to the Charter of the United Nations,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the long-standing confrontation between the Houthis and the Yemeni Government resumed in early 2014 and led to the Houthis' advance in August 2014; whereas the Houthis continued to consolidate their hold on power and territory and took over significant parts of the country, sparking months of clashes and the exile of Yemen's internationally recognised President, Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi;
- B. whereas Saudi Arabia is at the head of a coalition – backed by the United States and comprising the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, Morocco and Sudan – which has been bombing Yemen since 26 March 2015 in a strike campaign aimed at restoring Hadi to power; whereas Saudi Arabia has imposed a near-total blockade on Yemen, a country heavily reliant on imports; whereas the coalition's blockade of fuel and the targeting of civilian infrastructure are in violation of international humanitarian law;

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0270.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0172.

- C. whereas this confrontation between the Houthis and the Yemeni Government, exacerbated by the military strikes of the Saudi Arabia-led coalition, has caused a humanitarian emergency in Yemen; whereas around 80 % of the Yemeni population – around 21 million people – is in urgent need of some form of humanitarian aid to meet their desperate need for food, medicines and fuel;
- D. whereas since mid-March 2015 the conflict has spread to 20 of Yemen's 22 governorates, exacerbating an already dire humanitarian situation brought on by years of poverty; whereas the conflict in the country has killed around 7 500 people, half of them civilians, and wounded more than 27 500; whereas the UN is urgently calling on the authorities and the various factions to allow sustained access into the besieged cities, which would allow it to deliver help to the people in need, as the war in Yemen has been classified in the most severe category of humanitarian crisis; whereas thousands of refugees have managed to flee to neighbouring countries;
- E. whereas the country is facing a humanitarian catastrophe, including a risk of famine; whereas air strikes, shelling and violence continue to force Yemeni families from their homes, with over 2.5 million internally displaced people (IDPs); whereas around 7.6 million people in Yemen require emergency food assistance to survive; whereas at least 2 million people are malnourished; whereas around 8 million people have lost reliable and safe access to drinking water as over 50 % of the water network has been destroyed by fighting; whereas some 14 million people lack adequate access to health care assistance; whereas the catastrophic situation with regard to Yemen's health care system was made even worse with the destruction of three MSF medical facilities in Taiz and Saada; whereas the humanitarian appeal for Yemen for 2015 has been only 52 % funded;
- F. whereas 1.3 million children under five are at risk of malnutrition; whereas 320 000 children are already suffering from severe malnutrition; whereas at least 1.8 million children have had to drop out of school, in addition to the 1.6 million who were already out of school before the conflict began;
- G. whereas Yemeni women have been particularly affected by the conflict; whereas over 30 % of displaced households are headed by women; whereas the World Health Organisation has warned that medicines for many chronic diseases are no longer available and pregnant women may soon face dramatically increased risks of death during childbirth;
- H. whereas the conflict and the security vacuum it has caused have led to the dangerous expansion of extremist groups in the country, particularly in the areas of Abyan, Al-Ba'da'a and Shabwa; whereas Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula has consolidated its presence in the Governorate of Hadhramaut and its control of the port of Al Mukalla; whereas ISIS has continued its campaign of attacks and assassinations, including the killing of Jaafar Mohammed Saad, Governor of Aden, on 6 December 2015;
- I. whereas UN-sponsored talks took place in Switzerland from 15 to 20 December 2015 between the Government of Yemen, the Houthis and the General People's Congress; whereas the UN Special Envoy for Yemen announced the cessation of hostilities on the morning of 15 December 2015; whereas despite the willingness expressed by the parties to have a full and comprehensive cessation of hostilities during the talks, the violence

continued; whereas in order to minimise the violation, a coordination and de-escalation committee was established; whereas the agenda for the talks included the discussion of humanitarian issues, confidence-building measures and a general framework that could serve as the foundation for a comprehensive settlement; whereas the ceasefire was officially prolonged until 28 December 2015; whereas a new round of talks should have taken place from 14 January 2016 but has been delayed;

- J. whereas Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the world; whereas before the start of the war half of Yemenis already lived below the poverty line, two-thirds of young people were unemployed and basic social services were on the verge of collapse;
- K. whereas the conflict has been depicted as one between Shias and Sunnis in an attempt to obscure the real geopolitical reasons behind it; whereas Saudi Arabia accuses the Houthis of being backed by Iran and regards them as a threat to Saudi security; whereas the complexity of the conflict in Yemen has elements of a proxy war in a country with a strong presence of Al-Qaeda groups, and with separatist movements and Zaidi Shia rebels in the north and battles between the Houthis and armed groups in the south;
- L. whereas the EU has imposed an arms embargo and further targeted sanctions against a Houthi leader who is the son of former president Saleh; whereas, at the same time, EU Member States such as the United Kingdom, Spain, France, Italy and Germany continue to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia; whereas both the UK and Spain have significantly increased their supply of weapons; whereas Saudi Arabia is the UK's largest customer for weapons, and the UK is the biggest supplier of weapons to Gulf Cooperation Council countries; whereas the Control Arms coalition has denounced that this trade is in breach of the UK's obligations under the Arms Trade Treaty, the EU Common Position on Arms Exports and the UK's Consolidated Criteria on Arms Exports;
- M. whereas the US holds the al-Annad military air base in Yemen near the southern city of al-Houta, where Americans have commanded drone strikes against suspected members of the local Al-Qaeda branch; whereas the US drone strikes and the extrajudicial killing in Yemen since 2002 have contributed to the destabilisation of the situation in Yemen; whereas according to the latest report on Yemen issued by the UN's Office of the High Commissioner For Human Rights (OHCHR) drone strikes kill more civilians than alleged terrorists / Al-Qaeda members; whereas according to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism at least 424 people, including eight children, have now been killed in such missions since the start of operations in 2002;
- N. whereas former president Saleh was regarded as a US ally and received millions of dollars in 'counterterrorism' assistance and help to train the army; whereas those weapons were deployed against the Yemeni people and are now being used in clashes between various groups;
- O. whereas the geographical location of Yemen at the mouth of the Red Sea, which leads to the Suez Canal and opens onto the Gulf of Aden, holds strategic importance linked to significant maritime routes and energy resources;
- 1. Is deeply concerned about the dire humanitarian situation in Yemen, with around 21 million Yemenis in urgent need of humanitarian aid; calls on all the parties to ensure safe, rapid and unhindered access for humanitarian aid delivery to all affected

governorates, in particular Taiz;

2. Expresses concern about the UN's difficulties in obtaining the necessary funds for humanitarian aid and the failure of the EU Member States to provide the money pledged at the donors' conferences; reiterates its call on the Member States and the international community to urgently agree on UN-led coordinated humanitarian action to address the humanitarian needs in Yemen, and urges all Member States to contribute to these efforts;
3. Condemns the use of violence against civilians by any party in the conflict or by terrorists or other armed groups, which has led the country into a severe humanitarian crisis and resulted in a high number of civilians being wounded and killed and a high number of displaced persons; expresses its deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims;
4. Condemns the military strikes carried out by the Saudi-led alliance in Yemen, as well as the naval blockade imposed by Saudi Arabia on Yemen's ports; is convinced that Saudi intervention aims to reinforce its control in the region and that this will only bring more suffering to the Yemeni people and deeper division between religious groups in the Middle East;
5. Expresses its deepest concern at the ability of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and ISIS to benefit from the deterioration of the political and security situation in Yemen; recalls that all acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, and whenever, wherever and by whomsoever committed;
6. Expresses its appreciation and reiterates its full support for the efforts of the UN and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; reiterates that there can only be a political solution to the conflict in Yemen; calls, therefore, for all parties in Yemen to refrain from provocations and all unilateral actions and to proceed to Yemeni-led inclusive negotiations in order to restore peace in the country; is convinced that any long-term solution should address the underlying causes of poverty and instability in the country, as well as meet the legitimate demands and aspirations of the Yemeni people; reaffirms its support to any peaceful political effort to protect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen;
7. Deeply regrets the lack of attention paid by the international community and mass media to the conflict in Yemen;
8. Rejects any foreign military intervention in the country, be it Saudi or Iranian, Arab or Western; warns against the risk of going down the path of religious war; underlines that the war in Yemen is not simply a conflict between Shias and Sunnis; denounces the use of religious differences in instigating political crises and sectarian wars;
9. Reminds all parties of their responsibility to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law, which means protecting civilians, refraining from targeting civilian infrastructure and providing safe and unimpeded access to the country for humanitarian organisations; expresses grave concern over reports of the use of child soldiers by Houthi forces, Ansar Al-Sharia and government forces; calls for those responsible for violations and abuses of human rights or

violations of international humanitarian law to be held accountable for their actions;

10. Condemns the connivance and complicity of the EU with dictatorships in the region; is highly critical of the role played by the various Western interventions of recent years in fostering the exacerbation of conflicts in the area; states that there can be no military solution to the conflicts in the region; rejects the use of the notion of ‘responsibility to protect’, as it violates international law and does not offer an adequate legal basis for justifying the unilateral use of force;
11. Strongly criticises the intensive arms trade of EU Member States with various countries in the region, as in the case of the UK, Spain, France and Germany; calls for an immediate suspension of arms transfers and military support to Saudi Arabia and to its coalition partners; calls on the Council in this connection to verify whether there have been breaches of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports and to adopt measures to ensure that this code is fully respected by all the Member States;
12. Firmly opposes the use of drones in extrajudicial and extraterritorial killings; demands the ban on the use of drones for this purpose pursuant to its aforementioned resolution of 27 February 2014 on the use of armed drones which calls, in paragraph 2(a) and (b), to ‘oppose and ban the practice of extrajudicial targeted killings’ and to ‘ensure that the Member States, in conformity with their legal obligations, do not perpetrate unlawful targeted killings or facilitate such killings by other states’;
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, the governments of the Member States, the Government of Yemen, and the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council and of the UN General Assembly.