



Plenary sitting

B8-0323/2016

2.3.2016

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 situation in Eritrea
(2016/2568(RSP))

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on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Eritrea
(2016/2568(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief of 1981,
 - having regard to the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Pact of New York,
 - having regard to the Report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea of May 2014,
 - having regard to the revised Cotonou Agreement and its democracy and human rights clause,
 - having regard to the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative launched on 28 November of 2014,
 - having regard to Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union,
 - having regard to Article 208 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
 - having regard to the European Consensus on Development of December 2005,
 - having regard to the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness outcome document of December 2011 on partnership for Effective Development Co-operation,
 - having regard to the statement by the EEAS spokesperson on political prisoners in Eritrea of September 2014,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Eritrea achieved independence from Ethiopia in 1993, following a 30-year war; whereas, according to estimations, the 1998-2000 border war with Ethiopia produced between 54 000 and 137 000 casualties;
- B. whereas Eritrea is one of the least developed countries in the world; whereas more than half (61.0%) of the estimated 6 million inhabitants of Eritrea are aged 25 or under; whereas Eritrea is ranked 186 out of 188 in the UNDP's Human Development Index; whereas 69.0% of the population lives below the poverty line;
- C. whereas Eritrea is seriously threatened by climate change, which may have dramatic consequences for nutrition, access to water and sanitation, health and shelter;
- D. whereas Eritrea has not hold democratic elections since 1993; whereas the Eritrean

Constitution ratified in 1996 has never been implemented and, whereas from 2001 the country has fallen gradually into a dictatorship; whereas in January 2013, following a ‘mutiny of the exiled opposition which was presented as an abortive coup’ a new wave of mass arrests took place; whereas this was used to justify the closure of the country;

- E. whereas all forms of opposition, both in the country and abroad, are considered by the Eritrean authorities as a provocation, and individual are harassed, persecuted and in some cases threatened with death and killed;
- F. whereas the law limiting military service in Eritrea to a maximum of 36 months is not applied; whereas the conditions for military service are akin to slavery and are among one of the main reasons for young people to leave the country;
- G. whereas an estimated 305 000 Eritreans, or 5 % of the population, have fled the country owing to the drastic human rights situation and a stagnant economy; whereas the UN High Commissioner for Refugees says that of the 200 000 who made the Mediterranean crossing in 2014 some 18 %, or nearly one in five, were Eritreans;
- H. whereas the Eritrean regime requests at least 2 % of the earnings of the Eritrean diaspora for a recovery and reconstruction (RRT) tax; whereas the Eritrean diaspora is regularly subjected to threats, including reprisals against their families still living in Eritrea;
- I. whereas Eritrean authorities have refused entry to a UN Special Rapporteur on human rights appointed in October 2012 to investigate the reasons for the growing exodus; whereas the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights was also subjected to threats;
- J. whereas the UN Commission of Inquiry in Eritrea concluded in 2015 that the Eritrean Government engages in ‘systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations’ carried out in a ‘context of a total lack of rule of law’; whereas common patterns of abuses in Eritrea include forced labour during conscription, arbitrary arrests, detentions, extrajudicial killings, and enforced disappearance, together with torture, degrading treatment in detention, restrictions on freedoms of expression and movement, harassment of UN workers, CSOs, journalist and LGTBI people, and the repression of religious freedom, which according to the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea could be considered crimes against humanity;
- K. whereas human rights are universal, inalienable, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated; whereas development is a right; whereas according to several NGOs and the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea the standards for freedom of press and freedom of expression are considered among the worst in the world;
- L. whereas at least 21 Eritrean writers and journalists including the Swedish-Eritrean writer Dawit Isaak, were arrested on unknown charges in September 2001 and are still being detained and are incommunicado without charge or trial; whereas serious allegations have been made that they may have since died in the appalling conditions of Eritrean prisons;
- M. whereas there is no semblance of civil society organisations being in existence; whereas

this means that the effectiveness of international aid to Eritrea is disrupted;

- N. whereas the Horn of Africa is, and has always been, an important geostrategic region; whereas today the whole region is destabilised; whereas the Gulf states are worsening this destabilisation, particularly in the context of the war in Yemen; whereas these countries maintain privileged relations with Eritrea, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, which uses Eritrean logistical facilities, such as the Port of Assab, for their military interventions in Yemen;
 - O. whereas Eritrea is considered by the EU, and particularly some of its Members States which colonised part of the region, as a strategic country for their geopolitical and economic interests;
 - P. whereas international aid, including development aid, should be primarily focused on the needs of the population, democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law;
 - Q. whereas the EU has funded projects in Eritrea since its independence in 1993; whereas Eritrea suspended its cooperation with the EU in 2001, when Eritrea expelled nearly all foreign aid agencies working in the country;
 - R. whereas, on 28 November 2015, ministers in the EU-28 and several African states, including Eritrea, as well as the European and African Union launched the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative, also known as the ‘Khartoum Process’, which aims to externalise EU border control and limit the number of migrants travelling to Europe under the pretext of the fight against human trafficking and migrant smuggling; whereas the Khartoum Process also means international legitimacy and financial support to the Eritrean regime; whereas Eritrean authorities announced in February that this agreement would not lead to any reform of Eritrea’s military service policy;
 - S. whereas the Khartoum Process has been promoted by the Italian Presidency of the EU Council with the objective of combating human trafficking, migrant smuggling and the root causes of migration; whereas Eritrea can be the beneficiary of actions under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa and can receive additional funding channelled through the European Instruments for Democracy and Human Rights;
- 1. Believes that a durable solution to Eritrea’s problems can only be resolved by promoting a free, democratic and stable state in which peoples’ dignity and rights can be enhanced, guaranteeing equal rights for all citizens and fighting corruption;
 - 2. Strongly condemns the growing systematic violations of human rights in Eritrea and condemns its disastrous consequences for the Eritrean population and for the region as a whole;
 - 3. Condemns strongly the systematic harassment of journalists and civil society representatives in Eritrea; condemns, in addition, the systematic threats made against the Eritrean diaspora, including the RRT;

4. Is concerned by the pervasive link between business and politics and corruption in Eritrea; asks for an international independent inquiry on EU companies' involvement in human rights violations, in particular in forms of slavery, and their connivance and support to the Eritrean regime;
5. Is deeply concerned by the economic and social situation facing the population of Eritrea as a whole, in particular refugees and displaced persons, whose number will continue to rise, given the drastic human rights situation in the country itself and the tensions in neighbouring countries;
6. Strongly condemns the Khartoum Process which legitimates governments who are themselves the source of migration; condemns the financial support of the EU for policies whose aim it is to externalise border controls under the pretext of the fight against trafficking and to create 'information campaign' which in reality legitimise authoritarian regimes and dictatorships without changing anything of the internal policies of countries such as Eritrea;
7. Condemns all kinds of political conditionality, including collaboration on migration management, on Official Development Aid (ODA); calls on the EU and its Member States to effectively follow the principle of Policy Coherence for Development in all their actions towards Eritrea in order to ensure they are aligned and do not undermine the objective of poverty reduction and the sustainable development goals; deplores the increasing tendency of EU development policy to follow geopolitical, security and private profit interests;
8. Calls for the development focus and nature of ODAs to be protected, including a transparent and accountable reporting system; recalls the ODA's unique role in achieving effective development results; calls for EU aid to be aligned with internationally agreed development effectiveness principles, be human-rights centred, promote gender equality and women's empowerment and focus on tackling the root problems of inequality, poverty and chronic malnutrition in order to achieve the recently approved Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
9. Recalls that EU investment policy, especially when involving public money, must contribute to the realisation of the SDGs;
10. Urges the EU to take urgent and effective measures to help the Eritrean people enhance their resilience to El Niño in order to guarantee food security, access to water and sanitation;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the ACP-EU Council, the East African Community and the government of its member states, the institutions of the African Union and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.