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*Plenary sitting*

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**B8-0601/2016**

10.5.2016

## **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 Djibouti  
(2016/2694(RSP))

**Cristian Dan Preda, Mariya Gabriel, Andrej Plenković, Davor Ivo Stier, Eva Paunova, Milan Zver, Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz, David McAllister, Brian Hayes, Maurice Ponga, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Adam Szejnfeld, Jarosław Wałęsa, Marijana Petir, Giovanni La Via, Tunne Kelam, Patricija Šulin, Ivan Štefanec, Dubravka Šuica, Ivana Maletić, Jaromír Štětina, Therese Comodini Cachia, Sven Schulze, Luděk Niedermayer, Eduard Kukan, Pavel Svoboda, Romana Tomc, Lefteris Christoforou, Csaba Sógor, Roberta Metsola, Michaela Šojdrotová, Claude Rolin, Tomáš Zdechovský, Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso, Andrey Kovatchev, Krzysztof Hetman**  
on behalf of the PPE Group

**European Parliament resolution on Djibouti  
(2016/2694(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its resolution of 15 January 2009 on the situation in the Horn of Africa and its resolutions of 18 December 1997 and 4 July 2013 on the situation in Djibouti,
  - having regard to the statement of 12 April 2016 by the spokesperson of Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the EU, on the presidential elections held in the Republic of Djibouti on 8 April 2016,
  - having regard to the preliminary conclusions of 10 April 2016 of the African Union election observation mission which monitored the presidential elections,
  - having regard to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights, which Djibouti has ratified,
  - having regard to the Cotonou Agreement signed on 23 June 2000 and revised on 22 June 2010,
  - having regard to Rule 135(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, by virtue of its position at the tip of the Horn of Africa and the entrance to the Red Sea, Djibouti and its strategic infrastructure (ports and free zones) is important for the whole region;
- B. whereas Djibouti is considered as a hub for combating piracy and terrorism;
- C. whereas President Ismaïl Omar Guelleh was re-elected for a fourth 5-year term on 8 April 2016, with 87.1% of the vote; whereas the other five candidates received between 7% of the votes and 0.8% of the vote; whereas the USN and independent candidates rejected the election results, claiming the election lacked transparency and they also denounced massive presence of police in polling stations and the fact that their delegates were excluded from many polling stations;
- D. whereas no EU Electoral observation mission was invited and whereas the Electoral experts mission offered by the EU was turned down by the Djibouti authorities; whereas the preliminary conclusions of the African Union election observation mission state that the poll generally took place in peace and serenity despite the tense political context due to the failure of the implementation of the framework agreement of the 30th of December 2014 ; whereas the mission recommends the establishment of an Independent Electoral Commission in charge of the electoral process including the announcement of provisional results;
- E. whereas, following the contested parliamentary elections of 22 February 2013, and several rounds of talks between the Government and the USN, both parties finally

signed on 30 December 2014 a framework agreement on political dialogue which foresaw immediate measures, such as the creation of a joint parliamentary commission and the creation of an independent joint electoral commission, and short and medium term reforms; whereas in February 2015 the Joint Parliamentary Commission was established but none of the most important draft laws (law on the creation of an independent joint electoral commission, and the law on rights and obligations of political parties) has been submitted;

- F. whereas violence flared in Djibouti on 21 December 2015 when police broke up a traditional religious ceremony in Buldhoqo district, close to the capital Djibouti; whereas the massive intervention of special police forces caused the death of seven persons according to the government and 25 persons according to the opposition; whereas later police also invaded the premises where opposition leaders were meeting, injured a number of opposition leaders and imprisoned two prominent opposition leaders (Mr Abdourahman Mohammed Guelleh, Secretary General of USN, and Mr Hamoud Abdi Souldan), without any charge against them; whereas they were both released just a few days before the presidential elections;
- G. whereas, political space for the opposition remains very narrow with limited freedom of expression; whereas police forces and security services tightly control the country, and the judiciary is weak and close to the government;
- H. whereas Djibouti is ranked 170<sup>th</sup> (out of 180 countries) in the worldwide index of press freedoms 2015 compiled by Reporters Without Borders; whereas, according to this organisation "journalists are constantly harassed and subjected to government-orchestrated intimidation campaigns and, when arrested, are often tortured before being released and then prosecuted";
- I. having regard to the extremely worrying detention conditions in Djibouti's prisons;
- J. whereas the 1992 Constitution recognises fundamental liberties and basic principles of good governance;
- K. whereas Djibouti is a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and has signed and ratified the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance;
- L. whereas respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law are the very foundation of the ACP-EU partnership and constitute essential elements of the Cotonou Agreement;
- M. whereas the National Indicative Programme for Djibouti for the financial period 2014-2020 comprises 2 focal sectors: Water treatment and Food security; whereas, in view of the contested outcomes of the parliamentary elections of 22 February 2013 and of the presidential elections of 8 April 2016, greater attention should have been – and be paid to the sector of democratic governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law;
- 1. Expresses its strong concern about the stalled democratisation process in Djibouti and the tense political climate in the country;

2. Deplores the way the 8 April 2016 presidential elections were organized, in the absence of an independent joint electoral commission and with the opposition denouncing the massive presence of police in polling stations and the fact that their delegates were excluded from many polling stations;
3. Firmly condemns the harassment and imprisonment without charges of opposition leaders, journalists and independent human rights activists in the run up to the presidential elections; calls on the Djibouti authorities to put an end to the repression of political opponents and journalists and to release everybody who is being detained on political or freedom of the media grounds;
4. Strongly condemns the violence of 21 December 2015 initiated by the police and the security forces, which resulted in several deaths; expresses its condolences to the families of the victims and demands a full and independent inquiry to identify and bring to justice those responsible;
5. Calls on the Government of Djibouti to fully implement the independent joint electoral commission, as stipulated by the framework agreement on political dialogue signed by the Government and the USN on 30 December 2014 , prior to any new elections in order to secure that free and fair elections can be held in the future;
6. Calls on the Djibouti authorities to guarantee respect for the human rights recognised in the national and international agreements which Djibouti has signed and to safeguard civil and political rights and freedoms, including the right to demonstrate peacefully and the freedom of the media;
7. Calls on all political forces in Djibouti to respect the rule of law, including the right to demonstrate peacefully, and not to engage in violence and repressive measures;
8. Urges the EU to call upon all the Djibouti political forces to re-start in good faith the political dialogue on reforms in order to promote good governance and put an end to the tensions which have prevailed in the country over the last years;
9. Calls on the EU to engage Djibouti more assertively, within the framework of the political dialogue envisaged by Article 8 of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, to respect the principles of democratic governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and to scrupulously and immediately implement all of the recommendations formulated by the EU Electoral experts mission deployed on the occasion of the parliamentary elections of February 2013, none of which have to date been implemented;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Government of Djibouti, the institutions of the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly.