



Plenary sitting

B8-0996/2016

13.9.2016

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 Zimbabwe
(2016/2882(RSP))

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on behalf of the ECR Group

B8-0996/2016

**European Parliament resolution on Zimbabwe
(2016/2882(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Zimbabwe,
- having regard to the local EU statement on violence of 12 July 2016,
- having regard to the local EU statement on the abduction of Itai Dzamara of 9 March 2016,
- having regard to Council Decision (CFSP) 2016/220 of 15 February 2016¹ amending Decision 2011/101/CFSP concerning restrictive measures against Zimbabwe,
- having regard to the Constitution of Zimbabwe,
- having regard to the Cotonou Agreement,
- having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. whereas the people of Zimbabwe have suffered for many years under an authoritarian regime that maintains power through corruption, illegal violence and likely rigged elections; whereas the people of Zimbabwe have not experienced true freedom in decades and those under thirty have only known lives of poverty and violent repression; whereas the fear is that Mugabe's death will leave a power vacuum that will lead to more internal conflict;
- B. whereas unrest is growing in crisis-ridden Zimbabwe against a background of cash shortages, widespread unemployment, state corruption and efforts by the authorities to suppress freedom of expression and political opposition;
- C. whereas since the fall of the coalition government in 2013 the work of Tendai Biti in stabilising the economy and increasing government revenues, has been undone by a return to the system of patronage, kleptocracy and fear; whereas Zimbabwe is now experiencing the worst economic crisis since the hyperinflation of 2008; whereas the government is effectively bankrupt;
- D. whereas since May 2016 thousands of demonstrators - informal traders, unemployed young people and now, professional people - have hit the streets in a number of urban centres across Zimbabwe to protest against job losses, mass unemployment and the government's failure to meet people's basic economic expectations: a labour market that provides jobs, a public workforce that is paid on time, a trustworthy stable currency and an affordable price regime; whereas only the army are being paid regularly and with currency of worth;

¹ OJ L 40, 17.2.2016, p. 11

- E. whereas the protest movement led by clergyman Evan Mawarire, and using the hashtag #ThisFlag has drawn support from churches and the middle class which had hitherto tended to steer clear of street politics;
- F. whereas on 6 July 2016 a general strike organised by #This Flag was heeded by an unusually large number of people;
- G. whereas on 26 August 2016 bloody clashes took place in the capital Harare when the police ignored a court order and bludgeoned thousands of protesters who had gathered under the auspices of National Election Reform Agenda (Nera) to protest outstanding electoral reforms ahead of the country's eagerly anticipated 2018 national elections;
- H. whereas President Mugabe has been in power since independence in 1980 and is seeking re-election and whereas several members of his government have denounced calls for electoral reform ahead of the 2018 elections;
- I. whereas the police invoked on 2 September 2016 Statutory Instrument 101A to ban all demonstrations in central Harare, a few hours before 18 political parties were due to hold a big demonstration in the capital;
- J. whereas the High Court has suspended this ban on 7 September 2016 for seven days and whereas this ruling came just a few days after President Mugabe interfered in the judiciary's independence by blasting Zimbabwe's judges for 'reckless' rulings allowing demonstrations against his rule;
- K. whereas many demonstrations are now organised through social media, and the Zimbabwean government has announced plans for a law that would tighten social media controls and target what it calls 'cyberterrorists';
- L. whereas the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission said that the food aid, mobilised to assist hungry villagers affected by the El Niño-driven drought conditions across the country, was being distributed along party lines, with Zanu PF officials denying food aid to opposition party supporters; whereas according to the government half the rural population faces starvation;
- M. whereas 9 March 2016 marked the one year anniversary of the abduction of human rights defender Itai Dzamara;
- N. whereas the EU restrictive measures against the Zimbabwe regime were renewed in February 2016 until 20 February 2017; whereas the asset freeze and travel bans will continue to apply to President Mugabe, Grace Mugabe and Zimbabwe Defence Industries; whereas an arms embargo will remain in place; whereas the EU has lifted restrictions on 78 people and 8 entities;
- 1. Expresses serious concerns about the increase in violence during demonstrations in Zimbabwe in recent months; calls on all parties in Zimbabwe to respect the right to demonstrate peacefully to address genuine concerns; and urges the Zimbabwean authorities to investigate allegations of excessive use of force and other human rights abuses by

elements within the Zimbabwe Police, and to hold them to account;

2. Is worried about the rise of arbitrary arrests of human rights defenders and those engaging in peaceful and lawful demonstrations and urges that the rule of law should be respected and that the constitution should be upheld;
3. Urges the government of Zimbabwe not to interfere with the independence of the judiciary;
4. Reiterates that the EU restrictive measures against Zimbabwe can only be lifted if President Mugabe and the government build a more inclusive country based on the rule of law, respect for human rights and the consolidation of democracy;
5. Believes that the lifting of restrictive measures was clearly premature and that the Council and Commission should give consideration to re-imposing more restrictive measures, making clear that a package of assistance would be made available as soon as Zimbabwe was on the path towards democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights and in particular to provide assistance to support a free and fair electoral process and to reform the police;
6. Calls for a peaceful transition of power based on a free and fair election process, rule of law and human rights in order to develop a prosperous, pluralistic country;
7. Demands that Zanu PF stops manipulating food aid for political gain;
8. Is deeply disappointed at the lack of progress in the case of the abduction of Itai Dzamara and urges that those responsible for his abduction face justice;
9. 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 governments and the parliaments of the Member States, the EEAS, the Government and Parliament of Zimbabwe, the governments of the South African Development Community, the African Union, the Pan-African Parliament, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth.

