



Plenary sitting

B8-0186/2017

13.3.2017

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 EU priorities for the UN Human Rights Council sessions in 2017
(2017/2598(RSP))

Petras Auštrevičius, Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Marielle de Sarnez, Gérard Deprez, María Teresa Giménez Barbat, Marian Harkin, Ivan Jakovčić, Petr Ježek, Louis Michel, Javier Nart, Urmas Paet, Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruiz, Carolina Punset, Jozo Radoš, Frédérique Ries, Marietje Schaake, Hannu Takkula, Pavel Telička, Hilde Vautmans, Paavo Väyrynen

on behalf of the ALDE Group

**European Parliament resolution on EU priorities for the UN Human Rights Council sessions in 2017
(2017/2598(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Charter of the United Nations,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to the UN human rights conventions and optional protocols thereto,
 - having regard to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/251 establishing the Human Rights Council (UNHRC),
 - having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Social Charter and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on the United Nations Human Rights Council sessions,
 - having regard to its recommendation to the Council of 7 July 2016 on the 71st session of the United Nations General Assembly¹,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on the violation of human rights, including its urgency resolutions of 2016 on Ethiopia, North Korea, India, Crimea, Hong Kong, Kazakhstan, Egypt, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Pakistan, Honduras, Nigeria, Gambia, Djibouti, Cambodia, Tajikistan, Vietnam, Malawi, Bahrain, Myanmar, the Philippines, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Sudan, Thailand, China, Brazil, Russia, Tibet, Iraq, Indonesia, the Central African Republic, Burundi, Nicaragua, Kuwait and Guatemala,
 - having regard to its resolution of 14 December 2016 on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World and the European Union's policy on the matter 2015²,
 - having regard to Articles 2, 3(5), 18, 21, 27 and 47 of the Treaty on European Union,
 - having regard to the 2015 annual report of the UNHRC to the UN General Assembly,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the promotion and safeguarding of the universality of human rights is part of the European Union's ethical and legal *acquis* and one of the cornerstones of European unity and integrity; whereas respect for human rights should be mainstreamed in all EU

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0317.

² Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0502.

policy areas;

- B. whereas the EU is strongly committed to multilateralism and to the UN bodies as regards the promotion and protection of human rights;
- C. whereas the regular sessions of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), the appointment of Special Rapporteurs, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism and the Special Procedures addressing either specific country situations or thematic issues all contribute to the promotion of and respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law;

UN Human Rights Council

1. Welcomes the work done by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein and his Office (OHCHR); recalls the EU commitment to continue to support and defend its integrity, independence and functioning; welcomes the role played by the OHCHR in advancing cooperation between international and regional human rights mechanisms, and in identifying ways to increase the role of 'regional arrangements' in relation to universal human rights standards;
2. Is of the opinion that the UNHRC's effectiveness and credibility hinge on its members' genuine commitment to protect all persons in all countries from any human rights violations, in accordance with the international human rights conventions promoting universality, impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity, constructive dialogue and cooperation; urges the need to avoid the polarisation of debate in the UNHRC and encourages constructive dialogue;
3. Calls on states to grant access to the UNHRC's independent experts, Special Rapporteurs and OHCHR experts to investigate alleged human rights violations and to engage in a constructive way to redress the situation, to honour their commitments to the human rights conventions and to offer their full cooperation with the UNHRC Special Procedures (UPR); encourages all states to take concrete steps to act on UPR recommendations and to overcome shortcomings by putting in place an implementation and follow-up mechanism, including the establishment of national plans of action and national coordination mechanisms;
4. Recalls the General Assembly's obligation, when electing the membership of the UNHRC, to take into account candidates' respect for the promotion and protection of human rights, the rule of law and democracy; Welcomes the UNHRC decision requesting that the UNHRC Advisory Committee prepare an assessment report on the progress made in the establishment of regional and sub-regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights; calls for the EU and its Member States to reflect the equal importance of rights and voting patterns and to improve the coordination of EU positions in this regard; strongly requests that the EU speak with one voice and reach a common EU stance when it comes to vote in the UNHRC;
5. Reiterates the importance of ensuring that the EU engages actively and consistently in UN human rights mechanisms, in particular with the Third Committee, the General Assembly and the UNHRC, in order to improve its credibility; supports efforts made by the European External Action Service (EEAS), the EU Delegations in New York and

Geneva and the Member States to further increase EU coherence on human rights issues at the UN;

Thematic priorities

6. Underscores the importance of the role of human rights NGOs and defenders in the promotion and protection of human rights; highlights that human rights and fundamental freedoms need to be protected in every dimension of their expression, including in the context of new technologies; shares the UNHRC's concerns regarding reports of threats and reprisals against members of civil society organisations and NGOs that have cooperated with the UNHRC in the UPR process;
7. Expresses its serious concern at the numerous, ever-increasing attempts made to shrink the space of civil society and human rights defenders, including through the introduction of counter-terrorism laws; condemns any act of violence, harassment, intimidation or persecution against human rights defenders, whistle-blowers, journalists or bloggers, whether online or offline; calls on all states to promote and ensure a safe and enabling environment in which NGOs, civil society, journalists human rights defenders, women and children in particular, and vulnerable groups such as LGBTI people may operate independently and without interference; renews its call for those states that have adopted restrictive legislation against independent human rights organisations to lift them;
8. Believes that free, independent, impartial media constitute one of the essential foundations of a democratic society, where open debates play a crucial role; supports the plea for the appointment of a Special Representative to the UN Secretary-General for the safety of journalists; calls for the issues of freedom of expression online, digital freedoms and the importance of a free and open internet to be raised in all international fora; calls for the digital divide to be narrowed and for unrestricted access to information and communication, as well as uncensored access to the internet;
9. Recalls that the right to freedom of association and assembly continues to be a major challenge; warmly welcomes the work of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai; calls on all states to take the reports into due consideration;
10. Urge all states to swiftly ratify the Optional Protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and to the International Covenant of Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) establishing complaint and inquiry mechanisms;
11. Opposes any kind of discrimination and persecution on any ground or status such as race, colour, language, religion and belief, gender identity and sexual orientation, social origin, caste, birth, age or disability; supports the EU engagement with the relevant special procedures, including the new Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity; calls for the EU to actively continue to promote equality and non-discrimination and to fight against violence and discrimination against all individuals;
12. Expresses its concern that many people, individually or collectively, suffer violations of their right to freedom of religion or belief, committed by states and non-state actors,

leading to discrimination, inequality and stigmatisation; recalls the need to fight against intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief in order to ensure respect for other interdependent human rights such as freedom of expression;

13. Calls for the EU work on ensuring greater protection of religious and ethnic minorities against persecution and violence and on repealing laws criminalising blasphemy or apostasy serving as a pretext for the persecution of religious and ethnic minorities and non-believers; calls for the work of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief to be supported;
14. Strongly encourages the EU's continued support for a zero-tolerance approach to the death penalty, and calls for it to further seek to reinforce cross-regional support for the next UN General Assembly resolution on a moratorium on the death penalty; welcomes the decision taken in 2015 by Madagascar, Fiji, Surinam and the Republic of the Congo to abolish the death penalty for all crimes; deplores the resumption of executions in a number of countries, including Bahrain, Kuwait, Belarus, Bangladesh, India, Oman, South Sudan, Indonesia and Chad; further deplores the reported rise in the number of death sentences handed down in particular in China, Egypt, Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia; reminds the authorities of these countries that they are states parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which strictly prohibits the death penalty for crimes committed by anyone below the age of 18;
15. Calls for the EU to speak out and support the UN's work against torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, mass executions and executions for crimes including drug-related offences, and calls for the EEAS to step up, at all levels of dialogue and in all fora, the EU's efforts in the fight against summary executions, torture and other ill-treatment, in line with the Guidelines to EU Policy towards third countries on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; calls for the universal ratification and effective implementation of the UN Convention against Torture and the Optional Protocol thereto;
16. Expresses its serious concern at the persistence of grave human rights violations and abuses worldwide; staunchly supports the ICC as a key institution for holding perpetrators to account and assisting victims in achieving justice based on the principle of complementarity for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide; requests all parties to provide political, diplomatic, financial and logistical support to the day-to-day operations of the ICC;
17. Calls for the EU to continue to strengthen the work of the International Criminal Court (ICC); encourages strong dialogue and cooperation between the Court, the UN and its agencies, and the UN Security Council; regrets the decision taken by some African countries to withdraw from the International Criminal Court (ICC) and calls on them to reconsider; calls on all UN member states to join the Court by ratifying the Rome Statute, and to encourage the ratification of the Kampala amendments;
18. Condemns the lack of respect for international humanitarian law and expresses its grave concern about the increasing rate of civilian damage in armed conflicts around the world and about deadly attacks against hospitals, schools, humanitarian convoys and other civilian targets; insists that such violations be duly taken into account in UNHRC country-specific dealings and relevant reviews under the UPR mechanism;

19. Condemns in the strongest possible terms ongoing serious human rights violations, particularly those caused by ISIS/Daesh and the attacks by Boko Haram targeting children, as well as all other attacks by terrorist or paramilitary organisations against civilians, particularly women and children; denounces the frequency and scale of acts of destruction of cultural heritage, and calls for support for relevant efforts undertaken in various UN fora;
20. Calls for the EU to work actively for an initiative on UN recognition of the genocide perpetrated against ethnic and religious minorities by the so-called ISIS/Daesh, and for referral to the ICC of cases of suspected crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide; encourages strong dialogue and cooperation between the Court, the UN and its agencies, and the UN Security Council;
21. Calls for the EU to encourage all states to place human rights at the centre of their respective development policies and to implement the 1986 UN Declaration on the Right to Development; welcomes the recent appointment by the UNHRC of a Special Rapporteur on the right to development, whose mandate includes contributing to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right to development in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other international development cooperation agreements; highlights that human rights for all must be a cross-cutting feature in the achievement of all goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda;
22. Calls for the EU to continue to promote equality between women and men and to actively support the work of UN Women and gender mainstreaming initiatives in its activities and programmes; calls for continued support measures strengthening the empowerment of women and girls and the eradication of all violence and discrimination against women and girls including gender-based violence; strongly requests that the EU promote cross-regional initiatives for the promotion, protection and fulfilment of women's rights, contribute to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the ICPD and remain committed to sexual and reproductive rights in this context;
23. Recalls the EU's commitment to mainstream human rights and gender aspects in line with the landmark UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) on women, peace and security; calls for the EU to support internationally the recognition of the added value of women's participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction and sustainable reconciliation;
24. Calls for the EU to continue to promote children's rights, in particular by contributing to ensuring children's access to water, sanitation, healthcare and education, including in conflict zones and refugee camps, and by eliminating child labour, recruitment of child soldiers, deprivation of liberty, torture, trafficking, child, early and forced marriage, sexual exploitation and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation; calls for measures to support and strengthen international efforts through the UN to end the use of children in armed conflict, and to address more effectively the impact of conflict and post-conflict situations on women and girls; calls on all UN countries to uphold their treaty obligations and commitments under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989, in order to uphold the rights of all children under their jurisdiction

irrespective of their legal status, and without discrimination of any kind;

25. Calls on states to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, including their equal participation and social inclusion; calls on all states to ratify and implement the UN Convention on Persons with Disabilities;
26. Calls for the EU to work with partners on the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, including steps to encourage more states to adopt national action plans and engage in the work streams of the UN working groups and the OHCHR; renews its call to all states, and to the EU, to engage actively and constructively in this process with a view to establishing a legally binding instrument so as to prevent, investigate, redress and ensure access to remedy when human rights violations occur;
27. Welcomes the UN's New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which addressed the issue of large movements of refugees and migrants and led to the adoption of a global compact on a comprehensive refugee response (CRR) framework and the commitment that applies to migrants and refugees, and is aimed at saving lives, addressing specific needs, countering racism and xenophobia, combating human trafficking, ensuring equal recognition and protection before the law and ensuring inclusion in national development plans; calls on all the parties involved to ensure political engagement, funding and concrete acts of solidarity in support of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and recalls that the question of migration should continue to be examined on a global scale and not only at a European level; calls for the EU and its Member States to take the lead in these international efforts, and to uphold, in accordance with their obligations under international law, their commitments to protect the human rights of asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and all displaced persons, in particular women, children and vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities;
28. Recalls that the return of migrants should only be carried out in full respect of their rights and only when the protection of their rights is guaranteed in their respective countries; calls on governments to put an end to the arbitrary arrest and detention of migrants, including minors; calls on all states to take concrete measures in the best interests of child refugees and migrants on the basis of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and to introduce measures to strengthen child protection systems, including the training of social workers and other professional groups, as well as coordinated efforts with non-governmental organisations; calls on all states to ratify and implement the International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families;
29. Underlines the importance of promoting the universality and indivisibility of human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, in accordance with Article 21 of the Lisbon Treaty and the General Provisions on the Union's External Action;
30. Underlines the necessity to adopt a rights-based approach and to integrate respect for human rights into all EU policies, including those on trade, investment, public services, development cooperation and migration, and into its common security and defence policies;

31. Recalls the fact that internal and external coherence in the area of human rights is essential for the credibility of the EU's human rights policy in its external relations with third countries and calls for the EU to fulfil its commitments in this regard;

Country priorities

Belarus

32. Expresses its profound concern at the continued restrictions on freedom of expression and the freedoms of association and peaceful assembly; condemns the harassment of independent and opposition journalists and the harassment and detention of human rights activists and condemns the continued use of the death penalty; calls for the renewal of the UN Special Rapporteur's mandate on the human rights situation in Belarus at the 35th session of the Council, and calls on the government to fully cooperate with the Special Rapporteur and commit to engaging in long-overdue reforms to protect human rights, including by implementing the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur and other human rights mechanisms;

Burundi

33. Expresses its deepest concern at the worsening political and security situation in Burundi and the growing number of people fleeing the country; condemns the violence that has been occurring in Burundi since 2015 and has led to the deaths and torture of and targeted violence against women, including collective rapes and harassment; condemns the imprisonment of thousands of people and the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of Burundians and violations of freedom of the press and of expression, as well as the prevalence of impunity regarding such acts; calls for a thorough and independent inquiry into the killings and abuses and for the perpetrators of these acts to be brought to justice; supports, in this connection, the decision by the EU Council, following the failure of the discussions launched under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, to suspend direct financial support to the Burundian administration, including budgetary support, but to maintain full financial support for the population and its humanitarian aid through direct channels; calls for the EU and its Member States to support a joint statement on Burundi calling into question its UNHRC membership unless it starts to fully cooperate with the Commission of Inquiry (COI) and with the Council and its mechanisms, engages constructively with the COI and addresses the serious human rights concerns;

Democratic Republic of the Congo

34. Is extremely concerned at the serious human rights violations being committed with complete impunity by the security forces, and calls on those responsible to be held accountable; calls on the Council to consider extending the existing restrictive measures such as EU targeted sanctions, including travel bans and asset freezes on those responsible for the violent crackdown and for undermining the democratic process in the DRC, in the event of further violence, as provided for in the Cotonou Agreement; urges the DRC authorities to implement the agreement reached in December 2016 and the holding of the elections by December this year with the support of the international actors; calls on the UNHRC, in this regard, to maintain its scrutiny until the elections and until the democratic transition takes place; recalls the importance of the stability of

the Great Lakes region and, in particular, of the human rights situation in the eastern DRC, which includes the perpetration of sexual violence and is of extreme concern;

The Georgian regions of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia

35. Remains concerned about freedom of expression, freedom of media and the lack of access to the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, which are occupied by Russia and in which human rights violations remain widespread; urges the strengthening of people-to-people contact between the Tbilisi-controlled territory and the two occupied regions; calls for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia to be fully respected, as well as the inviolability of its internationally recognised borders; stresses the need for the safe and dignified return of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their place of permanent residence; calls on the Georgian Government to take appropriate measures with a view to ensuring a follow-up to the recommendations made in the UPR process;

Iran

36. Calls on Iran to cooperate fully with all UN human rights mechanisms and to work towards the application of the recommendations set forth in that context, including the Universal Periodic Review, by enabling international human rights organisations to carry out their missions; calls on the Government of Iran to address the substantive concerns highlighted in the reports of the UN Special Rapporteur and the UN Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in Iran, as well as the specific calls to action found in resolutions of the UN General Assembly; notes with concern that Iran has the highest level of death-penalty executions per capita in the world; calls on Iran to declare a moratorium on the death penalty; calls for the release of all political prisoners;

Myanmar/Burma

37. Is extremely concerned about the reports of violent clashes in northern Rakhine State and deplores the loss of lives, livelihoods and shelter and the reported disproportionate use of force by the armed forces of Myanmar; urges the military and security forces to put an immediate stop to the killings, harassment and rapes committed against the Rohingya people, and the burning of their homes; demands that the Government and the civil authorities of Myanmar immediately end the discrimination against and segregation of the Rohingya minority; calls for the rights of the Rohingya people to be safeguarded and for safety, security and equality to be guaranteed for all citizens of Myanmar;
38. Welcomes the decision of the Government of Myanmar to make peace and national reconciliation a key priority; Welcomes the announcement by the Government of Myanmar of the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry into the recent violence in Rakhine State; underlines the need to appropriately prosecute those responsible, and to provide adequate redress for victims of violations; calls on the Government of Myanmar to continue the process of democratisation and to respect the rule of law, freedom of speech and fundamental human rights; calls for the EU and its Member States to support a renewed mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Myanmar;

Saudi Arabia

39. Recalls its concern about the systematic violations of human rights in the country; condemns the alarming rate of death penalty orders in Saudi Arabia, including mass executions and calls on Saudi Arabia to impose a moratorium on the death penalty; urges the Saudi Arabian authorities to release all prisoners of conscience, including the 2015 Sakharov Laureate, Raif Badawi; calls for the EU to closely follow his particular case; reiterates that UNHRC members should be elected from among states which uphold respect for human rights, the rule of law and democracy; calls on the Saudi authorities to cooperate fully with the UNHRC Special Procedures and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights;

Syria

40. Condemns in the strongest terms the atrocities and widespread violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by the Assad forces with the support of Russia and Iran, as well as the human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law by non-state, armed terrorist groups, in particular ISIS/Daesh, Jabhat Fateh al-Sham /Al-Nusra Front and other jihadist groups; stresses the need to continue investigating the use and the destruction of chemical weapons by all sides in Syria and regrets the decision by Russia and China to block a new UN Security Council resolution on the use of chemical weapons; reiterates its call for full, unhindered humanitarian access, and for consequences and accountability for those guilty of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity; supports the EU initiative for referral of the situation in Syria to the ICC and calls on the UN Security Council to take action in this respect;
41. Welcomes the high-level panel set up by the resolution adopted at the UNHRC's 33rd session which, in consultation with the Independent International Commission on Inquiry (COI), will investigate enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention and the need for accountability for related violations, and will feature witness testimonies and Syrian voices; supports the mandate of the COI to conduct a special investigation into Aleppo which should be reported back on no later than at the UNHRC's 34rd session in March and requests that the report be presented to the General Assembly and the Security Council; supports the renewal of the mandate of the COI;

South Sudan

42. Calls on all parties to refrain from committing human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law, including those amounting to international crimes, such as extrajudicial killings, ethnically targeted violence, conflict-related sexual violence, including rape, as well as gender-based violence, recruitment and use of children, enforced disappearances and arbitrary arrests and detention; notes that the Government of Sudan signed the Roadmap Agreement on 16 March 2016 and subsequently clarified its commitments regarding the inclusion of other relevant stakeholders in the National Dialogue and continuing to uphold any decisions reached between the opposition signatories and the 7+7 Mechanism, the steering committee of the National Dialogue; insists on the need for all parties to respect their commitment and calls for a continued dialogue towards the establishment of a definitive ceasefire; calls for the EU and its Member States to maintain their commitment to supporting the efforts of the African Union to bring peace to Sudan and the Sudanese people in their transition to an

internally reformed democracy;

43. Calls for the EU and its Member States to renew the mandate of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, strengthen its role to conduct investigations into human rights abuses, and conduct a mapping of sexual violence; supports the integration of its recommendations into a report to be forwarded to the UN General Assembly and Security Council;

Ukraine

44. Deplores the fact that ongoing Russian aggression has caused a dire humanitarian situation in the Donbas, and that Ukrainian and international humanitarian organisations are being refused access to the occupied regions; expresses its deep concern over the challenging humanitarian conditions faced by more than 1.5 million internally displaced persons; is deeply concerned at the human rights violations in Russian-occupied Crimea, especially the dire situation of the Crimean Tatars, and stresses the need for further EU financial assistance for Ukraine; reconfirms its full commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders and its free and sovereign choice to pursue a European path; calls on all parties to immediately pursue the peaceful reintegration of the occupied Crimean peninsula into the Ukrainian legal system through political dialogue and in full compliance with international law; calls on the European External Action Service and the Council to strengthen pressure on the Russian Federation to allow international organisations access to Crimea for the purpose of monitoring the human rights situation in view of the ongoing gross violations of fundamental freedoms and human rights in the peninsula, and of establishing permanent international monitoring and convention-based mechanisms;

Yemen

45. Is extremely concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Yemen; condemns the fact that civilians are targeted and caught in an intolerable situation between warring parties giving them opposing instructions, in violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law; stresses that the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict is strictly forbidden by international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and in the case of recruitment of children under fifteen may amount to a war crime; calls on all parties to immediately release such children and to refrain from recruiting them; urges all parties to ease the tensions and establish an immediate and stable ceasefire that will lead to a political, inclusive and negotiated solution to the conflict; in this context, fully supports the efforts by the UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Ismaïl Ould Cheikh Ahmed, as well as the implementation of the Human Rights Council resolution 33/16 by October 2016 that requests the UN to work with the national independent commission of inquiry, and supports all efforts for an independent international investigation to break the climate of impunity in Yemen;

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46. 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 EU Special Representative on Human rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Security Council,, the UN Secretary-General, the President of the 71st UN General Assembly, the President of the UN Human Rights council, the UN High Commissioner for Human rights and the Secretary-General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.