



Plenary sitting

B8-0410/2017

12.6.2017

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 the humanitarian situation in Yemen
(2017/2727(RSP))

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**European Parliament resolution on the humanitarian situation in Yemen
(2017/2727(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, in particular following his visit to Sana'a from 21 to 24 May 2017,
 - having regard to the statements by the UN Humanitarian Coordination in Yemen, Jamie McGoldrick, of 28 March 2017 on the humanitarian situation in Yemen two years into the escalation of the conflict, of 7 May 2017 on the need to ensure funding and humanitarian access into and through Yemen, and of 24 May 2017 on the urgent need for funding to halt the spread of cholera,
 - having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on Yemen of 16 November 2015 and 3 April 2017, and to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on Yemen, in particular the one of 8 October 2016,
 - having regard to the Integrated Response Plan: Yemen Cholera Outbreak by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), updated on 23 May 2017, and to its Humanitarian Response Plan for Yemen for January-December 2017,
 - having regard to the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, in particular those of 14 April 2015 (S/RES/2216), 24 February 2016 (S/RES/2266) and 23 February 2017 (S/RES/2342),
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Yemen, in particular those of 9 July 2015¹ and of 25 February 2016²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 27 February 2014 on the use of armed drones³,
 - having regard to the Charter of the United Nations and to the principles of international humanitarian law,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the long-standing confrontation between the Houthis and the Yemeni Government has continued for more than two years, leading the country to the current humanitarian crisis, including a fast-spreading cholera outbreak of enormous scale;
- B. whereas on 14 May 2017 Yemen's Ministry of Public Health and Population declared a

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0270.

² Texts, adopted, P8_TA(2016)0066.

³ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0172.

state of emergency, stating that the health system is unable to contain this unprecedented health disaster, which to date has caused a total of 14 000 suspected cases, with 186 associated deaths; whereas an additional 98 126 cases are projected for the coming six months;

- C. whereas a total of USD 66.7 million is required to implement the activities of the OCHA Integrated Response Plan until October 2017 to control the cholera outbreak, prevent further spread and minimise the risk of recurrence;
- D. 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 – that has been bombing Yemen since 26 March 2015 in a strike campaign aimed at restoring President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi to power; whereas this coalition has committed grave violations, including strikes on homes, markets, hospitals and schools, that had resulted in thousands of civilian deaths, most of them of women and children; 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 targeting of civilian infrastructure are in violation of international humanitarian law;
- E. 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 Yemen is now the world's largest food security crisis, with around 80 % of the Yemeni population – around 21 million people – in urgent need of some form of humanitarian aid to meet their desperate need for food, medicines and fuel;
- F. whereas the salaries of over one million civil servants have not been paid for eight months as the militias stole funds from the Central Bank of Yemen; whereas this affects more than 8 million people and pushes many families towards extreme poverty and starvation;
- G. whereas malnutrition and cholera are interconnected; whereas 17 million people in Yemen are food insecure, including 7 million facing famine, 3.3 million acutely malnourished and with 462 000 children in the grip of severe acute malnutrition;
- H. whereas extensive violations by the Ansar Allah armed group, including the use of landmines, have been reported; whereas there have also been instances of extrajudicial executions by the forces of President Hadi and allied parties and armed groups; whereas Yemeni parties to the conflict are responsible for the indiscriminate shelling of civilians and civilians facilities, the denial of humanitarian access, arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances and torture;
- I. whereas currently most of the violence is focusing on the western coastline of Taiz Governorate, where pro-Government forces are attempting to make progress from Al-Dhubab and Al-Mokha towards the port of Al-Hoeidah and inland towards Taiz city; whereas over 50 000 civilians have been killed, injured or maimed; 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 ranked in the most severe category of humanitarian crisis; whereas thousands of refugees have managed to flee to neighbouring countries;

- J. whereas the country is facing a humanitarian catastrophe, including a risk of famine, aggravated by the cholera outbreak; whereas air strikes, shelling and violence continue to force Yemeni families from their homes, with millions of internally displaced people (IDPs); whereas over 8 million people have lost reliable and safe access to drinking water as most of the water network has been destroyed by fighting; whereas most Yemenis lack adequate access to health care assistance;
- K. whereas the 25 April 2017 High-level Pledging Conference for Yemen had generated USD 1.1 billion dollars in pledges, amounting to only 24 % of the overall humanitarian plan;
- L. whereas at least 1 540 children have been killed and 2 450 injured by hostilities, and over 1 550 have reportedly been recruited to fight or to perform military related duties; 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;
- M. whereas women in Yemen have traditionally been highly vulnerable to abuses such as child marriage and violence, as there is no legal minimum law in the country; whereas women have less access than men to medical care, property ownership, education and training; whereas their situation has been worsened by the conflict, and an estimated 2.6 million women and girls are at risk of gender-based violence; whereas the number of child marriages has increased significantly in the past two years; whereas around 30 % of displaced households are headed by women; whereas medicines for many chronic diseases are no longer available, and whereas Yemen has one of the highest maternal death rates; whereas malnourished pregnant and lactating women are more likely to contract cholera and have a higher risk of bleeding, adding considerably to the risk of complications and death during childbirth;
- N. whereas around 280 000 refugees, mainly from Somalia, are in Yemen, the only country in the Arab Peninsula signatory to the Refugee Convention and the Protocol; whereas these refugees are also in need of protection as the conflict has worsened; whereas some 30 600 Somalis have reportedly already returned to Somalia, and the UNHCR has established Return Help Desks;
- O. 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'eda and Shabwa; whereas Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula has consolidated its presence and Da'esh has continued its campaign of attacks and assassinations;
- P. whereas the convoy of the UN Special Envoy to Yemen was attacked on 22 May 2017; whereas UN-sponsored talks have been frozen and the conflict seems to be far from a political solution;
- Q. 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;
- R. 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, 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; whereas the conflict has promoted the expansion of Da'esh-affiliated groups in the country;

- S. whereas the EU and the UN has imposed an arms embargo on Yemen, and the EU has imposed targeted sanctions against Houthi leaders; 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 the UK, France and Spain have significantly increased their supply of weapons to actors involved in the conflict; 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 declared 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;
 - T. 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 killings carried out in Yemen since 2002 have contributed to the destabilisation of the situation in the country; whereas, according to reports 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;
 - U. whereas, according to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, at least 424 people, including children, have been killed in such missions since the start of operations in 2002; whereas there has been a dramatic increase in extraterritorial lethal operations in Yemen by the US since the Trump Administration took office, with at least 90 confirmed strikes, including two ground raids; whereas there is evidence that EU Member States such as the UK, Italy and Germany are providing both direct and indirect support for such lethal operations by providing intelligence and other operational support;
 - V. whereas former president Saleh was regarded as a US ally and received millions of dollars in 'counterterrorism' assistance and to help train the army; whereas the weapons received as part of this assistance have been deployed against the Yemeni people and are now being used in clashes between various groups;
 - W. 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 continuation of the conflict in Yemen, which has led to the current humanitarian crisis, with the situation becoming even more dramatic with the recent cholera outbreak;
 2. Expresses deep concerns over 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 donor conferences;

3. Recalls that cholera is preventable and treatable, so no life should be lost to this disease; urges the international community, and in particular the Member States, to fund the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan;
4. Condemns the use of violence against civilians by any party in the conflict or by terrorists or other armed groups, as such acts have led the country into a severe humanitarian crisis and resulted in thousands of civilians being wounded and killed, and in several million displaced persons; expresses its deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims;
5. Calls on the parties to the conflict to take all necessary steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against the civilian population, including sexual and gender-based violence; strongly condemns the violations of the rights of the child; expresses grave concern over reports of the use of child soldiers by Houthi, Ansar Al-Sharia and government forces, and at children's limited access to basic health care and education; calls for those responsible for violations and abuses of human rights law, or violations of international humanitarian law, to be held accountable for their actions;
6. 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 divisions between the peoples in the Middle East; is concerned about the increasing tension in the region caused by the decisions by Saudi Arabia, and later by the United Arab Emirates and others, to enforce a diplomatic and economic blockade on Qatar;
7. Reminds all parties, especially Saudi Arabia and its coalition, 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;
8. Calls on Saudi Arabia and its coalition to ensure that all ports and land routes remain open, in particular to exert efforts to avert an attack on Hudaydah, and to re-open Sana's airport;;
9. Expresses its concern over the ability of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and Da'esh 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 regardless of when, where and by whom they are committed;
10. Acknowledges and reiterates its full support for the efforts of the UN and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; condemns the grave attack on his convoy while traveling from the airport to the UN compound on 22 May 2017;
11. Reiterates that there can only be a political solution to the conflict in Yemen; calls, therefore, on all parties in Yemen to urgently agree on a cessation of hostilities, to be monitored by the United Nations as a first step towards the resumption of peace talks leading to Yemeni-led inclusive negotiations, in order to restore peace in the country; urges all parties to avert military action in Al Hodeidah;

12. 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;
13. Deeply regrets the lack of attention paid in the past two years by the international community and mass media to the conflict that has motivated the current humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen;
14. Rejects any foreign military intervention in the country, be it Saudi or Iranian, Arab or Western; underlines that the war in Yemen is not simply a conflict between Shias and Sunnis; denounces the instrumentalisation of religious differences, in particular by Saudi Arabia, to instigate political crises and sectarian wars;
15. 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’, also used as a pretext by different parties to the conflict in Yemen, as it violates international law and does not offer an adequate legal basis for justifying the unilateral use of force;
16. Calls on the international community, and in particular on Member States such as the UK, France, Spain and Germany, to end arms transfers to all warring parties in the country and, therefore, to take the necessary measures to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer to, or for the benefit of, designated individuals and entities and those acting on their behalf or at their direction in Yemen, in implementation of UN Arms Embargo on Yemen, as defined in paragraph 14 of UNSC resolution 2216 (2015);
17. Strongly criticises the intensive arms trade of Member States with various countries in the region, as in the cases 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, in this connection, on the Council 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 Member States;
18. Condemns the increasing use of drones for extraterritorial operations by the US under the Trump Administration; firmly opposes the use of drones in extrajudicial and extraterritorial killings; demands a 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 in paragraph 2(a) and (b) calls on the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Member States and the Council 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’;
19. 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.