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*Plenary sitting*

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**B8-0476/2017**

4.7.2017

## **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 Burundi  
(2017/2756(RSP))

**Cristian Dan Preda, Joachim Zeller, Sandra Kalniete, Mairead McGuinness, Elmar Brok, Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso, José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Patricija Šulin, Jarosław Wałęsa, Ivan Štefanec, Tomáš Zdechovský, Jaromír Štětina, Pavel Svoboda, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Michaela Šojdrová, Milan Zver, Dubravka Šuica, Sven Schulze, Krzysztof Hetman, Elisabetta Gardini, Claude Rolin, Brian Hayes, Maurice Ponga, Eduard Kukan, Lefteris Christoforou, Adam Szejnfeld, Bogdan Brunon Went, Romana Tomc, Roberta Metsola, Jiří Pospíšil, Csaba Sógor, Marijana Petir, Tunne Kelam, Seán Kelly, Ivana Maletić, Andrey Kovatchev, Laima Liucija Andrikiienė, Željana Zovko**  
on behalf of the PPE Group

**B8-0476/2017**

**European Parliament resolution on Burundi  
(2017/2756(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the European Parliament resolutions on Burundi, notably those of 9 July and 17 December 2015 and 18 January 2017,
- having regard to the Statement of 6 January 2017 by the Spokesperson of the HRVP on the banning of Ligue Iteka in Burundi,
- having regard to the African Commission of Human and People's Rights' resolution of 4 November 2016 on the human rights situation in the Republic of Burundi,
- having regard to the resolution adopted by the UN Human Rights Council on 30 September 2016 on the situation of human rights in Burundi,
- having regard to the Declaration of 21 October 2016 by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on South Africa and Burundi and the International Criminal Court,
- having regard to the report of 20 September 2016 of the UN Independent Investigation on Burundi (UNIIB),
- having regard to the report of 17 June 2016 of UN High Commissioner for human rights on the human rights situation in Burundi,
- having regard to the United Nations-appointed panel of experts report of 15 June 2017 on human rights violations,
- having regard to the Council decision of 8 March 2016 concerning the conclusion of consultations with the Republic of Burundi under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EU) 2015/1755 of 1 October 2015 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Burundi,
- having regard to UN Security Council Resolution 2248 (2015) of 12 November 2015 and 2303 (2016) of 29 July 2016 on the situation in Burundi,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 16 March, 18 May, 22 June and 16 November 2015 and 15 February 2016 on Burundi,
- having regard to the communique by the guarantors of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the region (PSC Framework) 27 January 2017,

- having regard to the report of 30 December 2015 of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders on his mission to Burundi,
  - having regard to the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi,
  - having regard to the Constitution of Burundi,
  - having regard to the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG),
  - having regard to the Cotonou Agreement,
  - having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights,
- A. whereas Burundi was plunged into grave political crisis and civil unrest after President Pierre Nkurunziza announced in April 2015 that he would run for a third term, regardless of the Burundian Constitution limiting the presidential mandate to two terms; whereas his re-election has faced strong opposition and resulted in a massive crackdown by the government and an alarming deterioration of the human rights situation in the country;
- B. whereas the report of the United Nations Independent Investigation on Burundi, UNIIB, points at the “abundant evidence of gross human rights violations and abuses” in the country, mainly by security forces and ruling authorities; whereas none of the atrocities reported are effectively investigated and their perpetrators prosecuted;
- C. whereas President Pierre Nkurunziza is not ruling out the possibility of amending the Constitution, enabling him to stand for a fourth term as of 2020; whereas internal procedures have been initiated seeking to remove restrictions on terms of office; whereas this appears to run counter to previous declarations by President Pierre Nkurunziza, undermining the collective efforts to find a viable long-term solution to the crisis;
- D. whereas the reported acts of violence include murder, abduction, enforced disappearances, torture, rape and arbitrary arrests and imprisonment; whereas corruption and the failure of the public authorities to take action is perpetuating a culture of impunity that is preventing many of those perpetrating acts of deadly violence, including members of the security forces and intelligence services, from being brought to justice;
- E. whereas, in October 2016, the Burundian authorities banned five human rights organisations; whereas, in January 2017, the oldest of these organisations in the country, the League Iteka, was also outlawed; whereas, in December 2016, Parliament passed a law imposing strict controls on international NGOs;
- F. whereas the government has been tightening its grip on independent media and newspapers, with journalists facing forced disappearance, physical threats and attacks, or judicial harassment; whereas all independent radio stations have been suspended; whereas Reporters Sans Frontières ranks Burundi 160th out of 180 in their 2017 World Press Freedom Index;

- G. whereas, in August 2016, the Burundian Government rejected the deployment of UN police officers to monitor the situation in Burundi; whereas the Burundian Government decided to suspend cooperation with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and refused cooperation with the commission of inquiry mandated by the UN Human Rights Council;
- H. whereas UN officials are reporting a tendency for government officials to sow the seeds of discord, raising fears of spiralling violence and a possible escalation of the crisis along ethnic lines; whereas there have been reports of widespread violence and intimidation by the CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy – Forces for the Defence of Democracy) and its Imbonerakure youth militia;
- I. whereas in October 2016, Burundi became the first country to begin the process of withdrawal from the International Criminal Court following its decision to open a preliminary investigation into violence and human rights abuses in the country;
- J. whereas on 8 December 2015, the EU began consultations with the Government of Burundi under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, in the presence of representatives of the ACP Group of States, the African Union (AU), the East African Community (EAC) and the UN; whereas, in March 2016, the EU closed consultations, having concluded that the commitments proposed by the Burundian Government in terms of human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law were unsatisfactory;
- K. whereas, at the close of these proceedings, the EU set out specific measures to be taken by the Government of Burundi in order to resume full cooperation;
- L. whereas both the EU and the US have adopted targeted and individual sanctions against Burundi, and the AU is currently considering them; whereas on 20 September 2016, EU restrictive measures were renewed until 31 October 2017;
- M. whereas the political deadlock in Burundi and the deteriorating economic situation are having serious consequences for the population; whereas the UN Agency for Refugees estimated that over 420 000 people have fled Burundi to seek refuge in neighbouring countries and that there are over 55 000 internally displaced Burundians; whereas this situation is endangering the stability of the region as a whole;
- N. whereas the EU suspended direct financial support to the Burundian administration, including budget support; whereas the EU committed to maintaining financial support for the population and humanitarian assistance, including projects aimed at ensuring access to basic services;
- O. whereas the EU has adopted targeted sanctions in respect of persons, entities or bodies undermining democracy or obstructing the search for a political solution in Burundi; whereas the African Union is also currently planning to adopt sanctions;
- P. whereas the security situation in Burundi poses risks for the stability of the region as a whole;

1. Expresses its deep concern regarding the worsening political and security situation in Burundi and at the number of victims and cases of serious abuses reported in the last 2 years; calls for an immediate end to violence and human rights violations;
2. Is concerned about the perception of impunity for the perpetrators of violence and human rights abuses; recalls that the Burundian authorities have an obligation under international and regional human rights legislation to guarantee, protect and promote fundamental rights, including the civil and political rights of the citizens; calls, in this context, for a thorough and independent inquiry into the killings and abuses that have occurred in recent years in Burundi, and for measures to ensure that those responsible are held to account;
3. Deplores the fact that the Government of Burundi has initiated proceedings for withdrawal from the Rome Statute establishing the ICC; calls on the Government of Burundi to reverse the withdrawal procedure and ensure that the country continues to participate fully in the ICC;
4. Calls on the Burundian government to comply with UN Resolution 2303 and allow the deployment of an UN Police Unit to monitor the security situation and to extend full support to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights;
5. Reminds the authorities of Burundi of their obligations to guarantee, protect and promote fundamental rights, including the civil and political rights of its citizens, as provided for in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and other international and regional human rights instruments;
6. Urges the Burundian authorities to conduct a prompt, independent and impartial investigation into all human rights abuses perpetrated, included by police and state officials, and duly hold those responsible accountable;
7. Reiterates its commitment to freedom of expression and reaffirms the key role played by civil society, lawyers, human rights organisations and the media in a democratic society; calls on the Burundian authorities, in this connection, to lift the prohibitions and restrictions imposed on those entities, reconsider the new legislation regarding foreign NGOs and ensure that journalists and human rights defenders can operate freely and safely in the country;
8. Expresses concerns about the new legislation on the creation of a national volunteer corps that could legalize the activities of the youth militia "Umbonerakure";
9. Is worried that the political crisis might turn into an ethnic conflict; urges all sides in Burundi to refrain from any behaviour or language that may further aggravate violence, deepen the crisis and may affect regional stability in the long run;
10. Urges all parties to establish the necessary conditions for rebuilding trust and fostering national unity through an inclusive and transparent national dialogue, including the

government, opposition parties and civil society in accordance with the Arusha Agreement and the Burundian Constitution;

11. Reaffirms its support of the EU's decision, following the consultation with the Burundian authorities under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, to suspend direct financial support to the administration of Burundi and welcomes the adoption of travel restrictions and asset freeze measures by the European Union against those seeking to undermine peace efforts or human rights; emphasises that the EU is maintaining full financial support for the people of Burundi, including humanitarian support provided through direct channels;
12. Is deeply concerned by the influx of Burundian refugees in neighbouring countries, and the alarming humanitarian situation of displaced persons in Burundi and reiterates its support for the humanitarian organisations present in the region and in neighbouring countries that are hosting refugees; urges the EU and other donors to step up funding and humanitarian aid for Burundians who are internally displaced or refugees;
13. Calls on the AU and the EU to seriously consider the regional dimension and prevent any further destabilisation of the region, in particular by maintaining a permanent political dialogue between countries of the region;
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the EEAS, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the African Union Commission and the Pan-African Parliament, and the Government of Burundi.