



Plenary sitting

B8-0652/2017

22.11.2017

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 situation in Yemen
(2017/2849(RSP))

Elena Valenciano, Victor Boştinaru, Knut Fleckenstein
on behalf of the S&D Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Yemen
(2017/2849(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Yemen, in particular those of 15 June 2017¹ and 25 February 2016² on the humanitarian situation in Yemen, and of 9 July 2015 on the situation in Yemen³,
 - having regard to the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR), Federica Mogherini, of 21 November 2017 on the situation in Yemen,
 - having regard to the statement by the EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides, of 11 November 2017 on the humanitarian situation in Yemen,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions of 3 April 2017 on the situation in Yemen,
 - having regard to the joint statement of the World Food Programme (WFP), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) of 16 November 2017 calling for the immediate lifting of the humanitarian blockade in Yemen,
 - having regard to the UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions on Yemen, in particular Resolutions 2216, 2201 and 2140,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas violence and airstrikes have continued to escalate in Yemen in particular since March 2015; whereas the humanitarian situation in Yemen continues to be catastrophic; whereas the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) declared the situation in Yemen the 'largest food security emergency in the world'; whereas, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 17 million people in Yemen require food assistance, 7 million of whom are facing a 'food security emergency'; whereas 2.2 million children are suffering from severe acute malnourishment, with one child dying of preventable causes every ten minutes; whereas there are 2 million internally displaced persons in Yemen and 1 million returnees;
- B. whereas, according to the UN, there are over 925 000 suspected cholera cases in Yemen, with more than 2 200 associated deaths;
- C. whereas the ongoing conflict is impacting the food imports on which Yemen depends heavily, but is also affecting transportation, infrastructure and local food production,

¹ Texts adopted: P8_TA(2017)0273.

² Texts adopted: P8_TA(2016)0066.

³ Texts adopted: P8_TA(2015)0270.

which is already low; whereas Yemen's rural population was already highly vulnerable before the conflict; whereas aid alone cannot address the food needs of 28 million Yemenis, and whereas long-term sustainable solutions for development and agriculture need to be found and the resilience of the population enhanced;

- D. whereas the humanitarian situation in Yemen was further exacerbated by the imposition by the Saudi-led coalition of a blockade of the country's land, sea and air borders on 6 November 2017; whereas the sea port of Aden and the al-Wadea land crossing at the Saudi-Yemeni border have been reopened; whereas, however, the ports of Hodeida and Saleef, as well as the airport of Sanaa, taken by the Huthi rebels in March 2015, through which approximately 80 % of imports, including commercial and humanitarian goods, enter Yemen, are still subject to the blockade;
- E. whereas the continuation of the blockade is predominantly affecting civilians and whereas the Huthi fighters are the least affected; whereas essential goods such as food and medical supplies cannot enter the country; whereas the continuation of the blockade would lead to the depletion by January 2018 of food stocks managed by the World Food Programme for 7 million people at risk of famine and the reversal of the progress made in the fight against cholera, and would jeopardise the provision of life-saving surgeries and basic healthcare;
- F. whereas the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, has expressed serious concerns over the deteriorating humanitarian crisis in Yemen and called for full and unrestricted access to be restored immediately;
- G. whereas UNSC Resolution 2216 explicitly provides for individuals to be classed by the Sanctions Committee as 'obstructing the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Yemen'; whereas on 17 August 2017, the UNSC recognised this conflict as a major cause of famine;
- H. whereas the coalition-led air strikes in and around Sanaa have intensified in recent weeks, causing civilian casualties and the destruction of infrastructure; whereas this was followed by the firing by Houthi rebels of ballistic missiles on Riyadh's main civilian international airport on 4 November 2017; whereas dozens more rockets have been fired into Saudi territory this year; whereas the laws of war prohibit deliberate, indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks on civilians; whereas such attacks are considered war crimes and individuals who commit them may be prosecuted for these crimes;
- I. whereas the Yemen war is a consequence of the wider conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran; whereas local and regional conflicts are highly intertwined and whereas the situation in Yemen could have more regional ramifications and carries grave risks for the stability of the region, in particular that of the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea and the wider Middle East; whereas Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has been able to benefit from the deterioration of the political and security situation in Yemen, expanding its presence and increasing the number and scale of its terrorist attacks; whereas AQAP and the so-called Islamic State (ISIS/Daesh) has established its presence in Yemen and has carried out terrorist attacks, killing hundreds of people;
- J. whereas there is an international arms embargo in place against the Houthi/Saleh forces; whereas in its resolution of 25 February 2016, Parliament called for an initiative aimed

at imposing an EU arms embargo on Saudi Arabia, in line with Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP of 8 December 2008 on arms exports;

- K. whereas EU funding for Yemen for the period 2018-2020 stands at EUR 150 million, focusing on resilience in the most critical areas of food security and nutrition and addressing key governance issues, the recovery of state institutions and the resumption of the delivery of basic public services;
1. Expresses grave concern at the alarming deterioration in the humanitarian situation in Yemen, which is characterised by widespread food insecurity and severe malnutrition, the outbreak of cholera, indiscriminate attacks against civilians and medical and aid workers, the destruction of civilian and medical infrastructure, and the continuation of airstrikes, ballistic missile strikes, ground-level fighting and shelling, despite repeated calls for a renewed cessation of hostilities;
 2. Expresses concern at the growing tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran; calls for the reopening without delay of all the country's ports, and land and air borders, including those in areas held by the opposition, in order to enable the urgent performance of life-saving activities; stresses that the blockade has widely and strongly exacerbated the already catastrophic humanitarian situation;
 3. Considers measures by the coalition to resume operations in the port of Aden and to open the al-Wadea border crossing as a step in right direction; urges the coalition to ensure immediate resumption of the activities of the ports of Hodeida and Saleef and the opening of land borders for humanitarian relief and the delivery of basic commercial commodities;
 4. Recalls that the Houthi rebels and the forces loyal to former President Ali Abdallah Saleh have also violated the laws of war by blocking humanitarian aid to civilians, adding significantly to the harm suffered by the civilian population;
 5. Calls on all the parties involved to allow immediate and full humanitarian access to the conflict-affected areas in order to be able to reach those in need; calls on the Council and the UNSC, in implementing UNSC resolution 2216, to identify individuals obstructing the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Yemen and impose targeted sanctions on them;
 6. Condemns in the strongest terms the ongoing violence and all attacks against and the targeting of civilians by all sides in the conflict, including their regional and international backers; condemns the indiscriminate missile attacks on Saudi cities, notably the main civilian international airport in Riyadh on 4 November 2017, by the Houthi/Saleh forces; condemns equally the indiscriminate and disproportionate coalition-led airstrikes leading to civilian casualties and destruction of civilian and medical infrastructure;
 7. Expresses grave concern that the continuing airstrikes and ground-level fighting have created instability which has been exploited by terrorist and extremist organisations such as ISIS/Daesh and AQAP; urges the Government of Yemen to assume its responsibilities in the fight against ISIS/Daesh and AQAP; emphasises the need for all parties to the conflict to take resolute action against such groups, whose activities

represent a grave threat to a negotiated settlement and the security of the region and beyond;

8. Underscores that retaliation and the continuation of airstrikes will only worsen the humanitarian crisis and the suffering of civilians and calls for an immediate ceasefire; reiterates its call for all sides and their regional and international backers to comply with international humanitarian law and international human rights law, to ensure the protection of civilians, and to refrain from directly targeting civilian infrastructure, in particular medical facilities and water systems; recalls that the deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and medical personnel, amounts to a grave violation of international humanitarian law; urges the international community to make provisions for the international criminal prosecution of those responsible for violations of international law committed in Yemen; fully supports, in this regard, the decision of the UN Human Rights Council to carry out a comprehensive investigation into the crimes committed in the conflict in Yemen; stresses that ensuring accountability for violations is indispensable to achieving a lasting settlement of the conflict;
9. Reiterates that there can be no military solution to the conflict in Yemen and that the crisis can only be solved through an inclusive, UN-led negotiation process, involving all the parties concerned, with the full and meaningful participation of women, leading to an inclusive political solution; restates its support for the efforts of the European External Action Service (EEAS) to facilitate a resumption of negotiations, and urges all parties to the conflict to react in a constructive manner and without attaching preconditions to these efforts; emphasises that the implementation of confidence-building measures, such as the release of political prisoners, immediate steps towards a sustainable ceasefire, a mechanism for a UN-monitored withdrawal of forces, facilitation of humanitarian and commercial access, Track II initiatives involving political, security and civil society actors, is essential to facilitating a return to the right political track;
10. Calls on the Council to effectively promote compliance with international humanitarian law, as provided for in the relevant EU guidelines; reiterates, in particular, the need for the strict application by all EU Member States of the rules laid down in Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP and to halt all arms sales to any belligerent party in Yemen; recalls, in this regard, its call for an initiative to impose an EU arms embargo on Saudi Arabia, given the serious allegations of breaches of international humanitarian law by Saudi Arabia in Yemen and the fact that the continued licensing of weapons sales to Saudi Arabia would therefore be in breach of Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP;
11. Calls on the EEAS and the Commission, in coordination with international financial institutions, to assist in the reactivation of the Central Bank in Sanaa to enable it to carry out its neutral and independent role, under impartial administration, so as to ensure the stability of the living conditions of Yemeni people;
12. Welcomes the fact that the EU and its Member States are ready to step up humanitarian assistance to the population across the country in order to respond to rising needs and to mobilise their development assistance to fund projects in crucial sectors; welcomes the

commitments made at the High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen and stresses the need for coordinated humanitarian action under UN leadership to ease the suffering of the people of Yemen; reiterates its call on all countries to fulfil the commitments made at the pledging event in order to contribute to addressing humanitarian needs;

13. Welcomes the recent launch of FAO and World Bank projects to provide immediate assistance to poor and food-insecure people in Yemen and to increase longer-term agricultural resilience; stresses that more should be done, financially and politically, to provide immediate humanitarian relief, but also to support conflict resolution efforts and sustainable development and food security as the only means for long-term, sustained peace in Yemen;
14. 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 governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and the Government of Yemen.