



Plenary sitting

B8-0681/2017

11.12.2017

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 Afghanistan
(2017/2932(RSP))

Petras Auštrevičius, Patricia Lalonde, Dita Charanzová, Gérard Deprez, Martina Dlabajová, Fredrick Federley, Marian Harkin, Ivan Jakovčić, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Valentinas Mazuronis, Louis Michel, Javier Nart, Urmas Paet, Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruiz, Jozo Radoš, Frédérique Ries, Robert Rochefort, Marietje Schaake, Jasenko Selimovic, Ivo Vajgl, Hilde Vautmans, Cecilia Wikström
on behalf of the ALDE Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Afghanistan
(2017/2932(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the communiqué of the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan of 4 and 5 October 2016,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Afghanistan, in particular those of 26 November 2015 on the situation in Afghanistan, in particular the killings in the province of Zabul¹ and of 13 June 2013 on the negotiations on an EU-Afghanistan cooperation agreement on partnership and development²,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on Afghanistan of 16 October 2017,
 - having regard to the statement made by the UN Security Council President on 14 September 2016 on the situation in Afghanistan,
 - having regard to UN Security Council Resolution 2210 (2015) on Afghanistan,
 - having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the EEAS to the European Parliament and the Council on ‘Elements for an EU Strategy on Afghanistan’ of 24 July 2017 (JOIN(2017)0031),
 - having regard to the Human Rights Watch (HRW) report of 13 February 2017 entitled ‘Pakistan Coercion, UN Complicity: The Mass Forced Return of Afghan Refugees’,
 - having regard to the HRW World Report 2017,
 - having regard to the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction’s (SIGAR) Quarterly Report to the United States Congress of 30 January 2017,
 - having regard to the EU-Afghanistan Joint Way Forward (JWF) on migration issues signed on 3 October 2016,
 - having regard to the EU-Afghanistan Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development signed on 18 February 2017,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the European Union and its Member States have been working with Afghanistan and the wider international community since 2001 to combat terrorism and extremism, while also striving to achieve sustainable peace and development; whereas, on account of increasing insurgent and terrorist pressure, a struggling economy and instability in the political sphere, these goals and the substantial progress which has

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0412.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0282.

been achieved are at risk;

- B. whereas the EU and its Member States have contributed billions of euros in humanitarian and developmental aid and assistance to Afghanistan since 2002; whereas the EU and its Member States are together the largest donor to Afghanistan, expected to provide up to EUR 5 billion during the period 2017-2020;
- C. whereas ensuring democracy, human rights, the rule of law and good governance throughout the transition in Afghanistan and into its decade of transformation are essential to establishing a stable and prosperous state;
- D. whereas major increases in the standard of living have occurred over the past 15 years since 2001, as access to basic healthcare and education and the empowerment of women have increased GDP per capita fivefold and average life expectancy by 15 years; whereas, according to the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), since the collapse of the Taliban in 2001, attendance at general schools had risen from one million students, most of whom were boys, to almost nine million by 2015, with female students accounting for an estimated 39 % of the total;
- E. whereas, following the 2014 presidential election crisis, the National Unity Government (NUG) has experienced stalled progress on its reform agenda, resulting in an increasingly unstable political situation;
- F. whereas widespread corruption, entrenched patronage systems and the inability of the politically fractured Afghan Government to move forward on reforms threaten to reduce progress or reverse past achievements;
- G. whereas, although some socio-economic and political gains have been made in recent years, a resurgent Taliban, Al-Qaeda and a newly emerged Islamic State (IS) presence in Afghanistan, alongside large numbers of Afghan migrants returning home, all threaten to turn instability into larger-scale conflict; whereas this has also led to increased migration to Europe; whereas 40 % of the Afghan population lives in poverty and the unemployment rate also stands close to 40 %;
- H. whereas, under the new US strategy for Afghanistan and South Asia, an additional 4 000 soldiers will join the existing US contingent of 8 400 soldiers; whereas the new US strategy will be developed favouring a conditions-based approach according to which diplomatic and economic agreements will be integrated within the framework of the military effort; whereas the new US strategy demands that Pakistan stop harbouring and supporting terrorists and calls for greater involvement by the Republic of India in helping to stabilise the region;
- I. whereas Afghanistan is facing an unprecedented increase in returns of documented and undocumented Afghan nationals, mainly from Pakistan; whereas the mass migration and huge number of displaced persons is the result of an organised Pakistani effort to forcibly remove Afghan refugees and displaced persons within Pakistan and relocate them to Afghanistan; whereas around two million undocumented Afghans and one million Afghans with refugee status are living in Iran and returning to Afghanistan;
- J. whereas the Republic of India is the largest regional donor to Afghanistan, providing

some USD 3 billion in assistance since the Taliban Government was ousted in 2001; whereas this assistance has funded, among other things, the building of more than 200 schools in Afghanistan, over 1 000 scholarships for Afghan students, and the possibility for roughly 16 000 Afghans to study in India; whereas India has also provided assistance in the construction of critical infrastructure, such as around 4 000 km of roadways in Afghanistan, most notably the Zaranj-Dilaram highway, the Salma dam and electricity transmission lines, and the Afghan parliament building;

- K. whereas instability in Afghanistan has negative economic and security repercussions for Iran and the wider region as a whole; whereas Afghanistan's economy is highly dependent on poppy production, which has increased significantly in recent years, resulting in a spike in drug use in neighbouring Iran; whereas this illicit drug trade is used by the Taliban to fund its operations; whereas limiting this trade and finding economic alternatives to it would be mutually advantageous for Iran and Afghanistan; whereas opium from Afghanistan is the main source of heroin in the EU; whereas working with Iran and other border countries such as Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan is necessary to further limit the flow of opiates to Russian and European markets;
- L. whereas a new infrastructure dimension is pivotal for the future of Afghanistan in order to enable an entirely new reality of economic and social opportunities for one of the poorest countries in the world; whereas a new national infrastructure development programme will attract positive and growing regional investment within the framework of the new Silk Road;
- M. whereas reports indicate that Afghanistan has between one and three trillion dollars of undeveloped mineral reserves; whereas illicit mining is a major problem that threatens to turn a potential driver of Afghan development into a source of conflict and instability; whereas mining is the Taliban's second largest source of revenue;
- 1. Welcomes the commitment of the Afghan Government to pursuing a national strategy focused on a qualitative political, social, economic and safe environment that will allow for a peaceful, secure and sustainable Afghanistan, as outlined in the conclusions of the Ministerial Conference on Afghanistan in Brussels on 5 October 2016; calls for the post of Prime Minister to be enshrined in the Afghan Constitution in order to enable greater political stability in Afghanistan; calls on the Afghan Government to ensure a transparent electoral process in 2018; urges the Afghan Government to abstain or refrain from exacerbating the existing social and political tensions related to the privileged treatment of the Pashtun community; calls on the Afghan Government to implement measures to review the situation and ensure that policies with a discriminatory impact on local communities are reformed;
- 2. Expresses extreme concern that, despite the political agreement following the 2014 presidential elections, the security situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated and the number of terrorist attacks has multiplied; is alarmed by the Taliban's ongoing territorial expansion and the recent strengthening of IS and Al-Qaeda terrorist groups; points out that, according to the US SIGAR, 6 785 members of the Afghan forces were killed and another 11 777 wounded from January to November 2016, and that the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) also reported a 3 % increase in civilian

casualties (3 498 killed, 7 920 wounded) in 2016 compared with the previous year;

3. Reminds the Afghan Government that in order to permit development and promote peace and stability, political infighting must cease; stresses that an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process is the only way forward, unreservedly integrating the whole of civil society and all parties to the conflict; calls for the EU to actively support an Afghan-led disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programme for former insurgents;
4. Warns that the poor capabilities of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) remain one of the most critical issues compromising Afghanistan's security and reconstruction;
5. Believes that the fight against corruption within the Afghan governmental institutions must be a permanent core priority on account of all the negative direct impacts of corruption on the quality of governance in the country; asks the Commission to ensure full transparency by the Afghan Government as regards financial assistance provided;
6. Stands with the people of Afghanistan and insists that all parties involved in the conflict adhere to international humanitarian law and respect the rights of all members of society, in particular minorities, women and children, who are disproportionately affected by the situation; urges the Afghan authorities to fully enforce the UN-Afghan action plan signed in Kabul on 30 January 2011 regarding the practice of 'bacha bazi' and enabling the rehabilitation of child victims of sexual abuse; condemns in the strongest terms the continued disregard for human rights and the barbaric violence carried out by the Taliban, IS and Al-Qaeda against the people of Afghanistan; draws attention to the risk associated with the return of former war criminals, notably Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the founder of Hizb-e-Islami, who was designated a terrorist by the US in 2003 and has been associated with the increased presence of IS in Afghanistan;
7. Is alarmed by the increasing resurgence of violence against women and the obliteration of women's rights and living conditions within areas controlled by the Taliban in Afghanistan; repeats its call on the Afghan Parliament and the Afghan Government to revoke all laws that contain elements of discrimination against women, which are in breach of the international treaties signed by Afghanistan;
8. Welcomes the Republic of India's commitment to assisting Afghanistan with the provision of four attack helicopters to the Afghan military in December 2015 and the military training of thousands of Afghan security personnel, which significantly helped to enhance its military capability, in accordance with the objective of NATO-led mission 'Resolute Support' to train, advise and assist the Afghan security forces and institutions, launched in January 2015; is encouraged by the work carried out and cooperation by the Republic of India and Afghanistan on infrastructure projects and humanitarian support;
9. Calls on the Government of Afghanistan and its regional partners, in particular Iran, to fight against illicit drug trafficking and illicit mining and coordinate with one another to eliminate these illegal practices, which are detrimental to the stability of the region; reminds all parties that these are the main sources of funding for terrorist organisations

in the region; recognises that mining in particular has the potential to be a positive driver of development and prosperity for the people of Afghanistan and in the region as a whole; condemns the repression, illicit drug trafficking, land grabbing, unlawful confiscation and extortion carried out by warlords;

10. Urges all Afghan regional actors to commit unreservedly to pursuing transparent engagement in the fight against terrorism; calls on Pakistan, in particular, to cease all activities conducted or sponsored by the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence on Afghan territory;
11. Calls on the Governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan, and other regional actors, to work together to pursue a peace settlement in Afghanistan, continuous socio-economic development and increased domestic stability, as well as cooperation on security and terror issues, and encourages intelligence sharing and cooperation to fight terrorists and extremists on both sides of the border;
12. Recognises the responsibilities of the EU and its Member States to respect the right to seek international protection and to participate in UNHCR resettlement programmes; stresses the right and ability to seek refuge in safe and legal ways as critical for preventing deaths among asylum seekers;
13. Calls on the Government of Pakistan to immediately cease the intimidation and forced expulsion or repatriation of Afghan refugees back to Afghanistan; points out that such acts are a direct violation of international humanitarian law and that the increasing number of refugees being treated this way only lends strength to terrorist groups and creates more instability in the region; encourages voluntary returns from the EU to Afghanistan; calls for the EU and the international community to commit to providing robust, long-term economic assistance to the ongoing emergency situation regarding all returnees in order to support their reintegration;
14. Expresses its deepest concern over the massive increase in the number of internally displaced people in 2016, with over 653 000 new displacements, which could lead to a massive humanitarian crisis; encourages all parties involved to provide for these vulnerable Afghans, and calls on the Afghan Government to help reintegrate them into Afghan society; stresses that, according to estimates by the Afghan authorities, UN agencies and other humanitarian agencies, over 9.3 million people will have required humanitarian assistance by the end of 2017;
15. Recognises that, despite substantial international efforts over a long period of time, Afghanistan is still facing a serious conflict which is hampering its economic and social development substantially; reiterates the European Union's goals of promoting peace, stability and regional security, strengthening democracy, the rule of law and human rights, promoting good governance and women's empowerment, supporting economic and human development, and addressing challenges related to migration;
16. 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 Parliaments of the Member States, and the Government and Parliament of Afghanistan.