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*Plenary sitting*

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**B8-0682/2017**

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))

**Sabine Lösing, Takis Hadjigeorgiou, Neoklis Sylikiotis, Stelios Kouloglou, Kostadinka Kuneva, Dimitrios Papadimoulis, Eleonora Forenza, Sofia Sakorafa, Paloma López Bermejo, Merja Kyllönen, Lola Sánchez Caldentey, Estefanía Torres Martínez, Tania González Peñas, Xabier Benito Ziluaga, Miguel Urbán Crespo**  
on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

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

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous reports and resolutions relating to Afghanistan,
- having regard to the new EU strategy for Afghanistan adopted by the Council of the European Union on 16 October 2017,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 18 July 2016,
- having regard to the appointment of the new EU Special Envoy to Afghanistan, Roland Kobia, on 1 September 2017 and to his recent visit to Afghanistan of 25 and 26 October 2017,
- having regard to the meetings of the EU-Afghanistan local Human Rights Dialogue of 1 June and 30 November 2016,
- having regard to the EU Foreign Affairs Ministers' decision of 27 May 2013 to extend the EU's police mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL) until 31 December 2014, and having regard to the Council's decision of 23 June 2014 to agree in principle on an extension of EUPOL up to the end of 2016,
- having regard to the statement of 3 November 2017 by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Fatou Bensouda, regarding her decision to request judicial authorisation to commence an investigation into the situation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan,
- having regard to the UN Security Council resolutions on Afghanistan, including its resolution 2189 of 12 December 2014,
- having regard to the 2016 Annual Report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA),
- having regard to the Resolute Support Mission (RSM), a NATO follow-up mission in Afghanistan that became operational on 2 January 2015,
- having regard to the US-Afghanistan Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) and to the NATO-Afghanistan Status of Forces and Personnel Agreement (NATO SOFA), both signed on 30 September 2014,
- having regard to the new US Strategy on Afghanistan, presented by President Trump on 21 August 2017,
- having regard to the international aid donor conference held by the EU in Brussels on 5 October 2016 (the 'Brussels Conference on Afghanistan') and to the document (renewed and updated) adopted at that meeting, 'Self-Reliance through Mutual

Accountability Framework (SMAF)'),

- having regard to the EU-Afghanistan Joint Way Forward (JWF) Declaration on migration issues released on 5 October 2016, and to the first Joint Working Group meeting held in November 2016,
  - having regard to the Amnesty International report 'Afghanistan: Forced back to danger: Asylum seekers returned from Europe to Afghanistan', published on 5 October 2017,
  - having regard to Afghanistan's accession to the World Trade Organisation in July 2016,
  - having regard to Afghanistan's low ranking in the Human Development Index Report 2015 of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in which it appeared as 171st out of 187 countries,
  - having regard to the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA),
  - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the overall security situation in Afghanistan has gravely deteriorated; whereas Afghanistan was ranked the second least secure country in the world in the 2017 Global Peace Index; whereas new waves of attacks by the Taliban in recent months and the penetration of ISIL into Afghanistan, leading to unprecedented attacks in Kabul and in provinces in the north and east, have left up to a third of Afghanistan's territory and 25 % of its population being cut off from government services;
- B. whereas UNAMA's 2016 Annual Report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict has documented the highest number of casualties since 2009, with 11 418 civilian casualties; whereas in total more than 25 000 Afghan civilians were reported killed, with even higher figures for people injured;
- C. whereas the ICC Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, has requested judicial authorisation to open an investigation into crimes alleged to have been committed in connection with the armed conflict in the country since 2003; whereas she has gathered over the years evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Taliban, by the Afghan police and intelligence forces, and by the US army and the CIA, ranging from targeting of humanitarian soldiers, use of child soldiers, and the torture of detainees, including in 'black site' detention facilities based in certain EU Member States, namely Poland, Lithuania and Romania;
- D. whereas the new US administration has increased its military forces in Afghanistan to a total of more than 14 000; whereas President Trump's strategy for Afghanistan is an open-ended commitment under which any withdrawal of troops will be determined by conditions on the ground, with no deadlines for ending the US military intervention;
- E. whereas Afghanistan is the most drone-bombed country in the world and the new US drone rules increase the risks for civilians; whereas attacks and retaliation attacks have caused severe loss of life;
- F. whereas the recent US decision to step up airstrikes and special forces operations risks

further increasing civilian casualties and death tolls; whereas following the death of 13 civilians in a NATO-led operation in the northern region of Kunduz, the Afghan and US military authorities promised an investigation but gave no further details; whereas following an airstrike by US forces in October 2015 against a Médecins Sans Frontières hospital in Kunduz, which killed or injured at least 42 staff and patients, no criminal charges were brought against those responsible;

- G. whereas recent UN figures for civilian casualties, released last month, indicate an airstrike-driven increase of 52 % in the first nine months of 2017 on the corresponding period last year, to 205 killed and 261 injured; whereas the Taliban and other armed insurgent groups are responsible for the majority of civilian casualties, i.e., according to UNAMA, approximately 60 %;
- H. whereas in 2016 600 000 people were displaced, bringing the total number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to 1.5 million; whereas 9.3 million Afghans are in dire need of humanitarian assistance and 9 million have limited or no access to essential health services; whereas 3 million have fled to Pakistan or Iran, while 1 million returned home in 2016;
- I. whereas the EU-Afghanistan JWF was introduced as a means of making aid conditional on the readmission of Afghan nationals in the EU, and was passed without the European Parliament's consent given the absence of a formal EU readmission agreement; whereas Afghans remain the second largest group of asylum seekers in the EU; whereas Member states have put thousands of Afghan asylum seekers, including unaccompanied minors, in harm's way by forcibly returning them to a country where they are at serious risk of torture, kidnapping, death and other human rights abuses; whereas according to an Amnesty International report of October 2017, the return of Afghan migrants is unlawful;
- J. whereas the total aid to Afghanistan provided since 1992 by the US, the EU and its Member States and other international donors, amounts to USD 130 billion; whereas this figure is comparable to the Marshall Plan for Europe; whereas EU humanitarian aid for Afghanistan in 2017 totalled EUR 30.5 million, while the figure for the last decade is EUR 756 million; whereas nevertheless, the economy remains seriously damaged and dependent on foreign aid;
- K. whereas the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have proven to be very costly; whereas there is a lack of long-term commitment on the part of both the EU and other members of the international community as regards financing the ANSF budget; whereas even with the planned reduction of personnel it will be impossible for the Afghan Government to provide the necessary financing; whereas this may lead to a dangerous situation in which a highly equipped militarised police and army could look for alternative ways of generating income;
- L. whereas 80 % of Afghan children attend school; whereas Afghanistan still ranks among the worst places for girls to get an education; whereas school graduation rates and the estimated national adult literacy rate for citizens aged 15 and older are still very low;
- M. whereas poppy cultivation and trade in opium have increased significantly, by 43 % between 2015 and 2016;

- N. whereas following the recommendations of the IMF and other actors, the Afghan Government has introduced a series of harsh neo-liberal reforms, including a flat-rate tax, and has lowered customs duties on imported goods from 43 % to 5.3 % ; whereas these reforms have failed to produce any significant increase in state revenue, resulting in budget and trade deficits;
- O. whereas NATO's 'Comprehensive Approach' has failed, ending up in the subordination of development aid to political and military objectives; whereas this approach can implicate certain civil actors as being part of the conflict in the eyes of the insurgents;
- P. whereas following negotiations, the implementation of the peace agreement between the Afghan Government and Hizb-e Islami is under way;
- Q. whereas with a view to the upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections the Afghan Government has advanced with electoral reform, adopting a new Election Law and appointing new members to the Electoral Management Bodies at the end of 2016; whereas fraud and corruption remain endemic; whereas the EU has supported the UNDP's Project Implementation Plan (PIP), providing advisory assistance; whereas nevertheless, an inclusive, transparent and credible election process will be key to assessing the democratisation of the country;
1. Points out that after 16 years of US- and NATO-led intervention, with numerous casualties, the self-sustainability and sovereignty of the Afghan state are still not guaranteed and its security has further deteriorated; stresses that this military presence, and especially its offensive operations, have further fuelled part of the conflict; therefore calls for the withdrawal of all EU, NATO and US troops, as there is no military solution for this conflict;
  2. Notes that an ICC investigation into war crimes and human rights violations has been proposed by the ICC Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, and believes there should also be an additional independent investigation under UN auspices, including into extrajudicial killings by drones, with a view to ending the culture of impunity as a key element for a stabilisation process in Afghanistan, and to creating public trust;
  3. Is deeply worried by the attitude of the US administration and its refusal to coordinate with the UN with a view to seeking, in a timely manner, the withdrawal of all troops; rejects all further deployments;
  4. Calls for the EU to support the Afghan Government in its pursuit of a comprehensive and inclusive, Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process, actively including the whole range of civil society and all parties to the conflict, including – following a ceasefire – combatant, insurgent and militia groups, since no lasting solution to the conflict can otherwise be achieved;
  5. Calls for the transformation of EUPOL Afghanistan into a support mission for an Afghan-led process of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration into society (DDR), inter alia with the goals of demobilising the various militias and reducing the numbers of ANSF personnel as far and as fast as possible; calls for the EU actively to support an Afghan-led DDR process for former insurgents; calls for the EU and NATO to support and adequately fund efforts for demining Afghanistan;

6. Stresses the need for inclusive regional cooperation with the objective of promoting long-term peace, stability and security in the wider region; favours a new approach to the security situation in Afghanistan and its neighbours, in the form of a multilateral forum for dialogue and negotiation between the countries and regions concerned, covering commitments relating to political, security, social, economic, environmental and human rights issues; stresses that such a forum could signal a new and constructive approach based on ownership, self-determination and the responsibilities of states towards their citizens and to each other; emphasises that this forum should be initiated in cooperation with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the UN;
7. Believes that women's rights are part of the security solution, and welcomes the initiatives aimed at ensuring that women play a prominent role at all stages of the peace and reconciliation process, as it is impossible to achieve stability in Afghanistan unless women enjoy their full rights in political, social and economic life;
8. Notes the lack of substantial progress on human and fundamental rights, in particular with regard to women and girls in Afghanistan; is deeply concerned that Afghan women continue to be victims of discrimination, violence, sexual abuse and rape under Sharia law; calls on the government to further implement the NAPWA with adequate financial means, as well as the law on the elimination of violence against women (EVAW) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
9. Encourages the Afghan Government to engage in establishing an independent judiciary and to guarantee freedom of the press;
10. Calls on the Afghan authorities to commute all death sentences and to reintroduce a moratorium on executions with a view to achieving the permanent abolition of the death penalty; also calls on the Afghan Government to put an end to all forms of torture and abuse, especially in prisons;
11. Is concerned at the high rate of unemployment, especially among Afghan young people, the lack of access to medical care, the poor state of the health system, and the fact that more than half of the population is living in poverty; underlines the need for the EU strategy for Afghanistan to focus primarily on development policy, in particular in rural areas, where the majority of the population lives, and on poverty alleviation, and to tie development aid to public infrastructure development in Afghanistan, in order to create urgently needed jobs and thus wean the country off dependence on foreign donors;
12. Believes that the State Building Contract for Afghanistan and the Citizen Charter, one of five National Priority Programmes, are helping to build on the efforts made to deploy public infrastructures and services for all, but remain insufficient from the viewpoint of self-sustainability, since on the other hand major elements of what should be government policy are being given away to the private sector, or else such measures are recommended by the Public Financial Management Roadmap (PFMR II) and the resulting Five-Year Fiscal Performance Improvement Plan (FPIP); recommends that higher custom tariffs be introduced in order to protect the country's economy and thereby foster prospects for increased exports;
13. Welcomes the law prohibiting the recruitment of children to the ANSF and the draft

Child Act, and encourages their fast implementation;

14. Remains concerned at the scant success so far of the measures to phase out opium cultivation in Afghanistan; calls for the creation of viable alternative livelihoods and for measures to help improve living conditions for populations in rural areas in general; welcomes, in this regard, the EU's support for the UNODC Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries; urges the Afghan authorities and all other parties concerned to combat transnational organised crime and drug trafficking;
15. Calls on the Member States to immediately stop deportations back to Afghanistan and to regularise Afghan asylum seekers, as the situation clearly shows that Afghanistan is not a safe country; calls on the EU and the Member States to cease making aid conditional on returns and externalisation of EU border controls;
16. 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 and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of Afghanistan, the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the UN and NATO.