



Plenary sitting

B8-0684/2017

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))

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on behalf of the S&D Group

B8-0684/2017

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

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Afghanistan,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on an EU strategy on Afghanistan of 16 October 2017,
 - having regard to the Joint Communication 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 Report of the UN Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security of 15 September 2017,
 - having regard to the EU-Afghanistan Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development signed in February 2017 that provisionally entered into force in December 2017,
 - having regard to the Brussels Conference of 5 October 2016 hosted by Afghanistan and the EU,
 - having regard to the EU Multiannual Indicative Programme for Afghanistan 2014 - 2020,
 - having regard to the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework,
 - having regard to the EU-Afghanistan Joint Way Forward on migration issues signed in October 2016,
 - having regard to the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons on his mission to Afghanistan of 12 April 2017,
 - having regard to UN Security Council Resolution 2344 (2017) on Afghanistan of 17 March 2017,
 - having regard to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) report on ‘Afghanistan’s Fight Against Corruption: The Other Battlefield’ of April 2017,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Afghanistan is marred by deep-seated political, economic and social turmoil; whereas the security situation in the country is extremely volatile; whereas life expectancy remains low and infant mortality high; whereas chronic malnutrition, poor sanitation and the spread of infectious diseases remain high;

- B. whereas the Taliban continues to control large parts of Afghanistan and is increasing its hold over sections of the country;
- C. whereas, in addition to the Taliban, other terrorist groups including Al-Qaeda and Daesh continue to destabilise the country; whereas civilian deaths have increased in recent years; whereas a terrorist attack in Kabul on 31 May 2017 killed 150 people and injured over 300 others;
- D. whereas the European Union is committed to assisting Afghanistan in establishing lasting peace and security, democratic consolidation, economic and social development and equality;
- E. whereas on 24 July 2017 the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy published a Joint Communication on an EU Strategy on Afghanistan which is based on the objectives of promoting peace, stability and regional security, strengthening democracy, the rule of law, human rights, good governance and women's empowerment, supporting economic and human development, and addressing challenges related to migration;
- F. whereas the EU is Afghanistan's largest development cooperation partner; whereas the EU and its Member States committed EUR 5 billion of the total EUR 13.6 billion pledged to Afghanistan for the period 2016-2020 during the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan in October 2016; whereas in 2016 the EU provided EUR 32 million in humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan;
- G. whereas the EU-Afghanistan Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development was signed in February 2017, establishing a legal framework for EU support to Afghanistan's reform programme under the 'Decade of Transformation 2015-2024';
- H. whereas life expectancy and living standards remain low but have improved substantially over the past 15 years; whereas access to primary healthcare and access to education have risen significantly;
- I. whereas despite the rise in living standards in recent years, political instability and stalled progress by the National Unity Government are hampering further improvements in the fragile state; whereas the unemployment rate in Afghanistan is 39% and over 39% of the population live in poverty; whereas there has been no substantial reduction in aid dependency;
- J. whereas women continue to face many barriers to full and safe participation in public life; whereas Afghanistan is ranked very low in access to education for girls;
- K. whereas widespread corruption poses a significant barrier to strengthening the rule of law, good governance and sustainable development;
- L. whereas the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which was established in 2002, supports the Afghan Government in its efforts to achieve peace, the protection of human rights and good governance; whereas its mandate is renewed annually by the UN Security Council and was most recently unanimously extended to 2018;

- M. whereas poppy production for illegal narcotics has increased substantially in recent years; whereas the illegal drugs trade is a major source of revenue for the Taliban; whereas opium grown in Afghanistan is the primary source of heroin entering the EU;
- N. whereas an estimated 1.3 million people are internally displaced in Afghanistan; whereas Afghanistan is facing an unprecedented number of both documented and undocumented returnees from Pakistan and other neighbouring countries; whereas human rights and humanitarian organisations have noted a campaign of mass forced returns from Pakistan;
- O. whereas the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) assumed the lead responsibility for security in 2014;
- P. whereas on 31 December 2016 the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL) ended its mandate and transitioned activities to local and international partners;
- Q. whereas Afghanistan is believed to have vast but underdeveloped mineral reserves and resources; whereas illicit mining leads to conflict and human rights abuses throughout the world; whereas the Taliban is exploiting mineral extraction as a source of funding;
1. Welcomes the fact that the Joint Communication on the EU-Afghanistan Strategy comprehensively reinforces the shared objectives of achieving peace, stability, security and sustainable development in Afghanistan; welcomes the political commitment of the EU and the Afghan Government to continue progress in these areas;
 2. Emphasises that progress must be achieved through an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned political process with political, financial and technical assistance provided by the EU and other international, multilateral and regional partners;
 3. Regrets the deteriorating security situation that is allowing criminal groups to kidnap both Afghan nationals and foreign citizens, including humanitarian and aid workers, and leading to ongoing violence and killings; expresses deep concern at the high number of terrorist attacks and of civilian casualties; expresses further alarm at the Taliban's increasing control of Afghan territory;
 4. Condemns in particular the attacks on hospitals and health clinics, schools and humanitarian operations; recalls that this is a serious breach of international humanitarian law;
 5. Acknowledges the efforts made by the ANDSF but draws attention to their limited capabilities to undertake comprehensive security provision in Afghanistan; calls on the EU and international actors to continue technical support and training to assist in improving the security situation;
 6. Welcomes the focus on women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming in EU assistance to Afghanistan, in particular the fact that 53% of EU programmes have gender equality as a significant objective; urges the Commission and the EEAS to continue prioritising the protection and empowerment of women in EU engagement with Afghanistan;

7. Recalls that the production and trafficking of opium in Afghanistan has devastating consequences on the local population and the overall security of the country; stresses therefore the importance of stemming the production and flow of opium in order to address drug trafficking and the financing of terrorism; urges the EU to work with regional partners in order to support the implementation of the Afghan National Drug Control Strategy; welcomes the support the EU gives to the regional UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) programme on counter-narcotics;
8. Emphasises the need for a sustained effort by the Afghan Government and international partners to support job creation and the conditions for stable and sustainable investment in order to tackle unemployment, and in particular youth employment, as a way of preventing radicalisation; welcomes the accession of Afghanistan to the WTO;
9. Condemns the continued flow of arms, including small arms and light weapons, and of improvised explosive devices into Afghanistan and in particular to terrorist organisations; calls for increased cooperation in Afghanistan and the region to tackle the illegal arms trade;
10. Notes the conclusion of the Joint Way Forward informal readmission agreement between the EU and Afghanistan; regrets the lack of parliamentary oversight and democratic control on the conclusion of this agreement; strongly regrets the increasing return of Afghan refugees from Europe, given that Afghanistan is not a safe country for its inhabitants and even less so for refugees and returnees; underlines that deportations to Afghanistan put the lives of returnees at grave risk, in particular those of single persons without a network of family or friends in Afghanistan who stand little chance of survival; underlines that the volatile security situation in Afghanistan, perpetuated by the Taliban and other terrorist groups, risks trapping refugees in a vicious circle of displacement and readmission; insists that EU development cooperation to Afghanistan should not be seen through the prism of migration; recalls that development assistance must not be conditional on cooperation on migration management, but must focus on where the need is greatest and on ensuring respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the refugees;
11. Is deeply concerned that the high number of internally displaced people in Afghanistan has the potential to trigger a serious humanitarian crisis; calls on the EU to continue comprehensive humanitarian support and development assistance for infrastructure support; calls on the Afghan Government to prioritise the protection and reintegration of internally displaced people and refugees returning to Afghanistan;
12. Deplores the reports of mass forced returns of Afghan refugees from Pakistan; expresses extreme alarm at the number of unaccompanied minors who are displaced in Afghanistan and returning to the country; urges the EU and international partners to work closely with organisations such as UNICEF and the Afghan Government on the protection of children in Afghanistan and along migration routes;
13. Calls for further action to tackle corruption in Afghanistan, without which efforts aimed at sustainable development for an inclusive society will be undermined; welcomes the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Justice Centre in Afghanistan in June 2016; encourages the Afghan Government to continue tackling endemic vested interests with greater standards regarding transparency in the public sector;

14. Welcomes Afghan membership of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative; urges the Afghan Government to increase transparency in the mining sector and to establish robust requirements for licences and monitoring in order to ensure a sustainable extractive industry which benefits the local population and does not contribute to terrorist financing;
15. Welcomes the scheduling of elections in Afghanistan in 2018 after several delays; calls on the Afghan Government to ensure a transparent and inclusive electoral process, notably by inviting the European Union to act an observer through the deployment of an Electoral Observation Mission (EOM);
16. Stresses the need to step up support for civil society organisations in Afghanistan to ensure their full involvement in democratic consolidation and the strengthening of state institutions; emphasises there can be no lasting peace and inclusive society without full participation by a strong and independent civil society;
17. 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.