



Plenary sitting

B8-0101/2018

6.2.2018

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 child slavery in Haiti
(2018/2562(RSP))

**Michèle Rivasi, Judith Sargentini, Heidi Hautala, Florent Marcellesi,
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on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
Ignazio Corrao, Fabio Massimo Castaldo

B8-0101/2018

**European Parliament resolution on child slavery in Haiti
(2018/2562(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Haiti, in particular those of 19 January 2011 and 10 February 2010,
 - having regard to the joint statement from Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, Neven Mimica, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Christos Stylianides, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Dimitris Avramopoulos, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship; Vera Jourova, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, and Marianne Thyssen, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility on the occasion of the World Day against Child Labour on 12 June 2017,
 - having regard to the ACP-EU migration action study on trafficking of human beings in Haiti from 20 July 2017,
 - having regard to the United Nations' Committee on the Rights of the Child "Combined second and third periodic reports of States parties - Haiti" of 9 March 2015,
 - having regard to the UN report on the situation of human rights in Haiti, 1 July 2015 - 31 December 2016,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
 - having regard to the Universal declaration on Human Rights,
 - having regard to the Cotonou agreement,
 - having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. Whereas decades of poverty, environmental deterioration, vulnerability to diverse forms of natural disaster, violence, political instability and dictatorship have left Haiti the most impoverished country in the western hemisphere,
- B. Whereas more than half of its 12-million population is malnourished and about half of

the Haitian population lacks access to basic healthcare services; whereas natural disasters, such as the 2010 earthquake have further deteriorated the already difficult living conditions of Haitians and reduced even more Haiti's administrative capacities,

- C. Whereas schools in Haiti are mostly run by private education providers, making their access for children of poor families often impossible,
- D. Whereas many families living in misery in mostly rural areas entrust their children to more wealthier families in mostly urban areas so as to offer them a better future by providing them with an education in exchange for menial chores; whereas this “restavek” phenomenon, which is deeply enrooted in Haitian culture, is widespread,
- E. Whereas on the contrary to their parents' expectations, “restavek” children are generally exploited by their host families, often prevented from going to school, are employed as domestic workers in the house, overloaded with chores and are victims of physical and verbal abuse,
- F. Whereas there are currently between 150 and 500 thousand “restavek” children, the majority of whom are girls who are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse and rape,
- G. Whereas the “restavek” phenomenon also has an international dimension with many Haitian children being trafficked to the neighbouring Dominican Republic,
- H. Whereas Haiti ranks third in the Global Slavery Index,
- I. Whereas an estimated 30,000 children live in approximately 750 mostly privately-run and financed orphanages; whereas the international charity Lumos estimates that at least US\$70 million dollars is donated to them annually, predominantly by North American funders, constituting one of the most significant forms of international aid to Haiti,
- J. Whereas Haiti is a party to the main international and regional conventions on human rights, childrens' rights, slavery and trafficking of human beings and has adopted legislation on trafficking in June 2014; whereas a law on child protection (loi du 5 juin 2003 « Relative à l'interdiction et l'élimination de toutes formes d'abus, de violences de mauvais traitements ou traitements inhumains contre les enfants”) forbids all forms of abuses, violence, maltreatment against children, but allows placing children into host families,
- K. Whereas the Haitian labour code does not address child labour at all,

- L. Whereas the government of Haiti made some efforts to address the exploitation of restavek children, such as the adoption of a comprehensive law to combat human trafficking, measures to identify and assist children in domestic servitude and awareness raising,
- M. Whereas infringements to existing laws are seldom prosecuted, often due to a lack of knowledge about the existence of such laws, a lack of investigative capacities and widespread corruption in the judiciary,
- N. Whereas Haiti is very much dependent on remittances from its diaspora community, whereas many Haitians abroad are currently at risk of being sent back, in particular from the US; whereas MINUSTAH has expressed concern about the limited capacity of Haiti to respond to the needs created by the growing risk of deportation due to an increasingly strict regional migration policy; whereas increased returns to Haiti bear a serious risk of further increasing the “restavek” phenomenon due to even more poverty as a consequence of reduced remittances.
1. Is shocked by the magnitude of the restavek phenomenon in Haiti, which in many cases amounts to a modern form of slavery; recognises that the restavek phenomenon is a consequence of the huge amount of poverty prevailing in the country,
 2. Welcomes the efforts accomplished by Haiti in order to develop its legal provisions on child protection, raising awareness on trafficking and child abuse and putting into place structures in order to cope with the problem,
 3. Considers however that the “restavek” phenomenon is still widespread and has even increased after the latest series of natural disasters in Haiti,
 4. Is concerned by the lack of detection of cases of child slavery and the widespread impunity related to such cases; considers this to be the result of a lack of investigative means, a lack of cooperation between concerned administrations and bodies in Haiti and with the Dominican Republic and widespread corruption of the judiciary,
 5. Calls on the Haitian authorities to address existing legal deficiencies, by explicitly forbidding child labour in case of placing children into host families, guaranteeing those children’s rights to access to education and to properly regulate child labour in the Haitian Labour code,
 6. Calls on Haitian authorities and donors to shift major resources currently spent on expensive but poor quality orphanage institutions and ensure that funding is spent on

community based services instead that strengthen the abilities of families and communities to care adequately for their own children; considers that this would in turn significantly reduce the number of children at risk of trafficking,

7. Calls on Haitian authorities and donors to develop schools as community hubs, so that families can access health, education, social protection, disability support, parenting training and economic strengthening services in one location in the local community,
8. Considers that the development of a robust and effective system for birth registration of all children is a prerequisite for fighting against child slavery and trafficking,
9. Calls on Haitian authorities and donors to continue and widen their efforts in raising awareness on existing legislation,
10. Calls on Haiti and the Dominican Republic to establish joint investigation teams in order to fight against child trafficking between the two countries,
11. Considers the fight against poverty to be a key element in reducing the restavek phenomenon; encourages the EU to scale up its support on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) to ensure Haitians are more resilient to recurring natural hazards; calls on the EU to upgrade its assistance in sustainable agriculture by targeting its support on small-scale farmer in order to ensure food security;
12. Stresses the pivotal importance of remittances from the Haitian diaspora; calls on all countries from the region, including the US, to seriously reconsider any plans to massively return Haitians to their home countries,
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Member States, the Vice President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the ACP-EU Council of Ministers, the institutions of the Cariforum, the Government and Parliament of Haiti, the Dominican Republic and the United States of America and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.