



Plenary sitting

B8-0384/2018

11.9.2018

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 threat of demolition of Khan al-Ahmar and other Bedouin villages (2018/2849(RSP))

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**European Parliament resolution on the threat of demolition of Khan al-Ahmar and other Bedouin villages
(2018/2849(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Israel-Palestine conflict,
 - having regard to the EU Guidelines on International Humanitarian Law,
 - having regard to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR), Federica Mogherini, notably that of 7 September 2018 on the latest developments regarding the planned demolition of Khan al-Ahmar,
 - having regard to the Six-Month Report on Demolitions and Confiscations of EU-funded structures in the West Bank including East Jerusalem, January-June 2018, published by the European External Action Service (EEAS) on 24 August 2018,
 - having regard to the UN Security Council resolutions on the Israel-Palestine conflict, notably Resolution 2334 adopted on 23 December 2016,
 - having regard to the UN human rights conventions and international humanitarian law treaties to which Israel, Palestine and EU Member States are States Parties,
 - having regard to its study of 25 June 2015 entitled ‘Occupation/Annexation of a Territory: Respect for International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights and Consistent EU Policy’,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on 5 September 2018, the Israeli High Court of Justice dismissed the last-resort petitions of the residents of the Bedouin community of Khan al-Ahmar in the West Bank, and the village now faces imminent risk of demolition and the forced transfer by the Israeli authorities of its 180 inhabitants, including more than 90 children;
- B. whereas after nine years of litigation on this case, the Israeli Court concluded that the Khan al-Ahmar village was illegally constructed and that there were no grounds to intervene in or suspend the execution of demolition orders; whereas the Israeli state has plans to relocate four communities in the area, including Khan al-Ahmar, to a site located south-west of Jericho in the immediate vicinity of a sewage treatment facility; whereas the communities concerned have refused to be displaced;
- C. whereas the residents of Khan al-Ahmar are descendants of Bedouins who were expelled from the Negev desert by Israel in the 1950s and relocated in the West Bank on the outskirts of Jerusalem, from where they were repeatedly expelled; whereas the village is situated between two large Israeli settlements; whereas the residents have been subjected to constant pressure by the Israeli authorities and neighbouring settlers

and suffer from harsh living conditions, including lack of health, education and welfare services and basic infrastructure;

- D. whereas the demolition of Khan al-Ahmar risks setting a negative precedent for dozens of other Bedouin communities across the West Bank; whereas according to the Israeli NGO B'Tselem, the Israeli authorities have deliberately refused to issue building permits and the expulsion is part of a plan to remove all Palestinian communities from the area east of Jerusalem and halfway towards the Jordan River, thereby creating a wedge of Israeli settlements that would split the West Bank in two;
- E. whereas the VP/HR has called on the Israeli authorities to reconsider their decision to demolish Khan al-Ahmar, and has warned that the demolition of Palestinian communities and possible forced population transfers are illegal under international law, and would be a very serious development that would severely threaten the viability of the two-state solution;
- F. whereas local civil society organisations have warned that a number of other Palestinian communities are at imminent risk of forcible transfer, as a result of the opening of new legal channels that allow the Israeli armed forces to carry out fast-track demolitions, the advancement of several bills aimed at expanding Israel's control over East Jerusalem, a major upsurge of settlement activity and a marked pro-settlement shift in the position of the US administration; whereas this latest development is set against a background of heightened tension, with the recent adoption of the Nation-State bill by the Israeli Knesset;
- G. whereas the forcible transfer of people who are protected within an occupied territory is a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and amounts to a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;
- H. whereas EU and Member State diplomats and Members of the European Parliament have repeatedly warned against the demolition of Khan al-Ahmar as a symbol of Israel's policy of demolition of Palestinian infrastructure and settlement expansion in the West Bank;
- I. whereas 10 EU Member States are supporting humanitarian programmes in Khan al-Ahmar, including the construction of a primary school, and an estimated EUR 315 000 worth of EU-funded humanitarian assistance is now at risk;
- J. whereas according to the Office of the EU Representative in Palestine, destruction and seizure of Palestinian property in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continued in the first half of 2018, affecting 197 Palestinian-owned structures and resulting in the displacement of 176 Palestinians, including 70 children, while also adversely impacting a further 5 000 people; whereas the EU Office reported the demolition of 26 structures funded by the EU or EU Member States, worth EUR 60 963, in that period; whereas between 2009 and 2018, over 450 EU- and EU Member State-funded structures worth over EUR 1.3 million were demolished or seized; whereas no compensation has been sought for such destruction; whereas 36 schools in Area C and eight schools in East Jerusalem, half of which have received EU or Member State funding, are the subject of pending demolition or 'stop work' orders; whereas an estimated number of over 13 000 Palestinian structures in Area C are currently the

subject of outstanding demolition orders owing to lack of required building permits;

- K. whereas under international law, third parties, including EU Member States, have a duty not to encourage, aid or assist the establishment of settlements and to do everything reasonably within their power to prevent the establishment of any new settlement and to bring such unlawful practices to an end;
1. Is deeply concerned at the risk of imminent demolition of the Bedouin village of Khan al-Ahmar, and urges the Israeli authorities not to proceed with the demolition plans and expulsion of the inhabitants;
 2. Warns the Israeli authorities, as the occupying power, that the demolition of Khan al-Ahmar and the forcible transfer of its residents would constitute a grave breach of international humanitarian law amounting to a war crime; insists that those responsible for such an international crime would be held accountable;
 3. Insists that the EU's response must be commensurate to the seriousness of this development and consistent with its long-standing support to the community of Khan al-Ahmar; calls on the VP/HR to step up drastically the EU's engagement with the Israeli authorities with regard to full respect for the rights of the Palestinian population in Area C, and to press for the immediate cancellation of all plans for forcible relocation and all demolition and eviction orders against them;
 4. Welcomes EU support for communities at risk of forcible transfer, and calls for further investment in Area C, notably in support of the Bedouin population; calls on the Commission to ensure that such aid is delivered in a way that reverses fragmentation, fully integrates the political dimension of occupation, and effectively supports Palestinian self-determination;
 5. Expresses alarm at the continued destruction and confiscation of humanitarian assistance in Area C; deplores the lack of resolve of the EEAS and the Commission, as highlighted by the European Court of Auditors, to secure compensation and guarantees of non-repetition from the Israeli authorities; expects the Commission to deduct the equivalent of these losses from bilateral EU assistance to Israel;
 6. Remains firmly convinced that the only lasting solution to the conflict in the Middle East is that of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace within secure and recognised borders, on the basis of the 1967 'green line' and with Jerusalem as the capital of both states;
 7. Condemns the continued expansion of Israeli settlements, which constitutes a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, fuels Palestinian resentment and despair, and represents the single most important obstacle to the viability and prospects of the two-state solution;
 8. Underscores the resolve of the international community, as expressed again by the UN Security Council in December 2016, not to recognise any changes to the 1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiation; calls on the Israeli authorities to immediately halt and reverse their settlement policy; calls for the EU to remain steadfast on the issue;

9. Decides to send an ad hoc delegation to assess the situation on the ground in relation to the destruction of EU-funded projects in Area C;
10. 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 UN Secretary-General, the Quartet, the Israeli Government, the Knesset, the President of the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian Legislative Council and the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly bodies.