



Plenary sitting

B8-0122/2019

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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 Zimbabwe
(2019/2563(RSP))

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on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

**European Parliament resolution on Zimbabwe
(2019/2563(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of December 1948, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 and the and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
 - having regard to the Charter of the United Nations of 1945 and in particular Article 1 (2) on “the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples”,
 - having regard to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ratified by Zimbabwe in May 1991, and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993
 - having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights of June 1981, which Zimbabwe has ratified,
 - having regard to the most recent local EU statement on Zimbabwe,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Zimbabwe,
 - having regard to Rules 135(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. Whereas the fall of Robert Mugabe, in November of 2017, generated a great hope, since the majority of the population had believed in the renewal promised by the new head of state, Emmerson Mnangagwa; whereas 15 months later, things had little changed and living conditions have deteriorated and the few companies that still operate have been gradually closed;
- B. whereas the announcement made on January 12 by Emmerson Mnangagwa, President of Zimbabwe, to increase fuel and diesel prices by 150 percent - when the country is already considered as the country with the highest fuel prices in the world and that real prices are actually much higher has caused the revolt of the population; whereas the government says the price hikes were put in place to avert fuel shortages and to crack down on the illegal trading of fuel however it is possible that it has the opposite result; whereas the prices of basic products such as oil and flour have doubled in recent weeks;
- C. whereas the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) called a 3-day national strike that triggered a series of demonstrations in different cities against economic austerity measures and rising fuel prices; whereas this resulted in a massive shutdown of most shops and businesses in the capital and led to a strong repression by the authorities, which has resulted in several deaths;
- D. whereas the state security forces used real ammunition, rubber bullets and tear gas, against demonstrators and houses; whereas they made indiscriminate raids, arbitrary arrests of

members of civil society and the political opposition and the government ordered the blocking of internet access;

- E. whereas, according to human rights organizations, at least 15 people were killed, 78 were gunshot wounds, and more than 340 cases of assault and torture were recorded; whereas the Human Rights Commission appointed by the government, made public a report which reveals that the soldiers and the police had used systematic torture;
- F. whereas scores of women and girls have said they have been raped over the past two weeks by army officials; whereas women called on the Zimbabwean authorities to take action against military personnel accused of rape and sexual assault;
- G. whereas around a thousand people have been arrested mostly for public order offenses; whereas the social organizations are denouncing the lack of judicial guarantees, affirm that collective trials are being carried out against the accused; whereas Evan Marawire, a prominent activist, was arrested on charges of incitement to violence in the demonstrations and he was recently released on bail;
- H. whereas the president asked for a national dialogue that started on the 6th of February; whereas he has invited all the political parties but the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), the main opposition party, has refused to participate;
- I. whereas in July 2018 presidential, parliamentary and local government elections were held; whereas the announcement of the results was not given immediately and this provoked demonstrations that were severely repressed by the public force; whereas at least six people were killed and dozens more arbitrarily arrested; whereas the President Mnangagwa announced a Commission of Inquiry to look into the post-election violence; whereas the report of the Commission of Inquiry has recently determined a disproportionate use of force in post-election repression in Zimbabwe; whereas the investigation, led by former South African President Kgalema Motlante, has accused some leaders of the main opposition party of fomenting tensions over the elections and inciting the protests, which he said were planned in advance; whereas there are some complaints from civil society about the independence and impartiality of the Commission;
- J. whereas the deep economic and social crisis which the country has been experiencing for years and which has lately intensified; whereas the unemployment rate is estimated by international organizations to be close to 80% (excluding the informal sector), whereas the share of the population living below the poverty line is estimated at over 80%;
- K. whereas repayment of debt and debt interest covers around 80% of the country's GDP; whereas 70% of Zimbabwe's external debt is held by 'public' players such as the World Bank, the IMF and some third states; whereas hyperinflation has ruined the country and the whereas the high inflation continues to have consequences on the price of foodstuffs and to generate chronic food shortages;
- L. whereas the National Indicative Programme (NIP) for Zimbabwe has been allocated EUR 234 million for the period 2014-2020 under the 11th European Development Fund, to be focused on three main sectors, namely health, agriculture-based economic development, and governance and institution building;

- M. whereas the US imposed individual sanctions on Zimbabwe in 2001 and the EU in 2002; whereas the President of South Africa has requested the international community to withdraw sanctions against Zimbabwe;
- N. whereas although the Zimbabwe Constitution of 2013 stipulates that "no one can be forced to marry against their will" and that the authorities must ensure that children are not compromised, the government still has to amend or repeal the other marriage laws existing that still allow child marriage; whereas the Constitutional Court of Zimbabwe declared that child marriage was unconstitutional;
- O. whereas the section 73 of the Criminal Law of 2004 punishes consensual conduct between persons of the same sex with up to one year in prison or a fine or both; whereas this legislation contributes to stigma and discrimination against the LGBTBIQ population;
1. Condemns the violence of the repression of peaceful demonstrations, condemns all intimidation, harassment, arbitrary arrests and violence against human rights activists, the opposition, and the society;
 2. Condemns the arbitrary restrictions on the rights to freedom of assembly, association and expression; considers State authorities have a duty to ensure people's rights to freedom of expression, and to facilitate and protect the right to peaceful assembly and that It is essential that all sides, including the protestors, refrain from the use of violence and seek to resolve the situation peacefully;
 3. Calls on the authorities to end the escalating crackdown and attacks on protesters, human rights defenders, activists and opposition leaders and other people by the security forces; calls for the end of torture, murder, rape and arbitrary arrests of civic society leaders by the military, state security agents;
 4. Calls on the Government to ensure that security forces handle protests and exercise their power - especially the use of firearms and live ammunition - strictly in accordance with the country's international human rights obligations and the relevant principles, including legality, necessity, proportionality, precaution and accountability
 5. Stresses the need for independence and impartiality of justice; calls on the authorities to respect the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and notably Article 14 thereof on the right to a fair and timely trial based on clear charges and ensuring the respect of the defendants' rights;
 6. Calls on the authorities of Zimbabwe to undertake a prompt, thorough, impartial and independent investigation into allegations of human rights violations and abuses including rape and other sexual abuse of women by security forces; considers that anyone suspected of being responsible should be brought to justice in fair trials;
 7. Welcomes the start of a national dialogue process announced by the president and requests on the authorities to ensure that peace and human security prevails to allow for all stakeholder to freely express their views on the national dialogue process ;
 8. Calls on the Zimbabwean authorities to release all political prisoners immediately and unconditionally;

9. Stresses that Zimbabwe must respect and implement its domestic, regional and international human rights obligations, including the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1998;
10. Welcomes the decision of the Constitutional Court to annul section 27 of the Law on Public Order and Security, which prohibited demonstrations without prior authorization of the Police of the Republic of Zimbabwe;
11. Expresses particular concern over the economic and social situation in Zimbabwe, recalls that the country's main problem is poverty, unemployment and chronic undernourishment; considers that many problems the Zimbabwean people are facing are linked with the sequels of the segregation regime of Rhodesia; considers that these problems can only be solved through the implementation of ambitious public policies on employment, education, health and agriculture;
12. Expresses concern over the continuous increase in the prices of basic goods as well as in fuel prices and its method of fixing in dollars, which makes it inaccessible for the vast majority of the population; condemns the economic, social and political interference implemented in third countries through the Structural Adjustment Plans of the World Bank and the IMF; stresses that these policies have led to economic, social, political and humanitarian crises;
13. Stresses the fact that Zimbabwe is one of the most indebted country in the world; calls for a human needs-based approach to debt sustainability through a binding set of standards to define responsible lending and borrowing, debt audits and fair debt workout mechanism, which should assess the legitimacy and the sustainability of countries' debt burdens and the cancellation of unsustainable and unjust debt; recalls the urgent need for an international mechanism to restructure sovereign debt;
14. Supports the guiding principles on foreign debt and human rights formulated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, under which the right to achievement of the sustainable development goals should take priority over debt repayment; calls on Member States of the European Union to promote the systematic use of human rights impact assessments as part of debt sustainability assessments undertaken by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank;
15. Expresses particular concern about the situation of women in the country; Urges the authorities to take all necessary measures to ensure the effective implementation of laws that penalize gender violence and sexual assault; Stresses the need to review the legal regimes of written and customary law so that they are in conformity with the CEDAW and the Maputo Protocol;
16. Calls on the authorities to combat all forms of violence against women; calls, furthermore, to ensure effective and accessible reporting channels and protection measures that are sensitive to victims' needs and confidentiality; urges for an end to be put to impunity and for appropriate criminal sanctions against perpetrators to be ensured; calls the authorities to promote gender equality and women's empowerment through boosting women and women rights organisations participation in public and political life; calls for a comprehensive EU approach on violence against women and girls with increased efforts and resources to prevent and eliminate all discriminatory practices against women as well as to combat and

prosecute all forms of violence including trafficking in human beings, female genital mutilation, forced sterilisation, forced pregnancy, domestic violence and marital rape, child, early and forced marriage and sexual violence;

17. Strongly condemns the obstruction of food aid for political gain; insists that the EU must ensure that the funding allocated to Zimbabwe for its National Indicative Programme effectively addresses the sectors concerned and the most needed; request an accurate assessment of the use of these European funds;
18. Reject all external operations, destabilization strategies and external interference in the internal affairs of Zimbabwe; considers that it is up to the Zimbabwean people to decide their present and future free from any external interference; underlines that there is a need for solidarity based on the principles of national sovereignty and independence, territorial integrity, peace, rights, social progress, friendship and cooperation;
19. 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, the European External Action Service, the Government and Parliament of Zimbabwe, the governments of the Southern African Development Community, the African Union, the Pan-African Parliament, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.