



Plenary sitting

**B8-0512/2017 }
B8-0514/2017 }
B8-0515/2017 }
B8-0520/2017 }
B8-0522/2017 }
B8-0524/2017 }
B8-0526/2017 } RC1**

13.9.2017

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of the Rules of Procedure

replacing the motions by the following groups:

EFDD (B8-0512/2017)
S&D (B8-0514/2017)
GUE/NGL (B8-0515/2017)
Verts/ALE (B8-0520/2017)
ECR (B8-0522/2017)
ALDE (B8-0524/2017)
PPE (B8-0526/2017)

on Gabon: repression of the opposition
(2017/2830(RSP))

**Cristian Dan Preda, Joachim Zeller, Sandra Kalniete, Jarosław Wałęsa,
Pavel Svoboda, Ivan Štefanec, Luděk Niedermayer, Tunne Kelam,
Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Tomáš Zdechovský, Lefteris Christoforou,
Željana Zovko, Marijana Petir, Claude Rolin, Dubravka Šuica,
Francis Zammit Dimech, Maurice Ponga, Laima Liucija Andrikienė,
Ivana Maletić, László Tőkés, Sven Schulze, Agnieszka Kozłowska-
Rajewicz, Milan Zver, Adam Szejnfeld, Elisabetta Gardini,**

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Ramona Nicole Mănescu, Roberta Metsola, Eduard Kukan, Seán Kelly, Deirdre Clune, Andrey Kovatchev, Krzysztof Hetman, Stanislav Polčák, Csaba Sógor, Julia Pitera, Patricija Šulin, Mairead McGuinness, Inese Vaidere

on behalf of the PPE Group

Elena Valenciano, Victor Boștinăru, Soraya Post, Jo Leinen

on behalf of the S&D Group

Anna Elżbieta Fotyga, Monica Macovei, Raffaele Fitto, Notis Marias, Angel Dzhambazki, Valdemar Tomaševski, Branislav Škripek, Ruža Tomašić, Karol Karski, Charles Tannock

on behalf of the ECR Group

Hilde Vautmans, Urmas Paet, Nedzhmi Ali, Petras Auštrevičius, Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Gérard Deprez, Martina Dlabajová, Nathalie Griesbeck, Marian Harkin, Ivan Jakovčić, Petr Ježek, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Javier Nart, Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruiz, Robert Rochefort, Hannu Takkula, Pavel Telička, Ramon Tremosa i Balcells, Ivo Vajgl, Johannes Cornelis van Baalen, Paavo Väyrynen, Cecilia Wikström, Dita Charanzová, Marietje Schaake, Norica Nicolai, Filiz Hyusmenova, Valentinas Mazuronis

on behalf of the ALDE Group

Marie-Christine Vergiat, Lola Sánchez Caldentey, Barbara Spinelli, Miguel Urbán Crespo, Estefanía Torres Martínez, Tania González Peñas, Xabier Benito Ziluaga

on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

Yannick Jadot, Michèle Rivasi, Maria Heubuch, Heidi Hautala, Judith Sargentini, Eva Joly, Florent Marcellesi, Bodil Valero, Barbara Lochbihler, Bart Staes, Ernest Urtasun, Igor Šoltés, Davor Škrlec, Bronis Ropé, Jordi Solé

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Isabella Adinolfi, Ignazio Corrao, Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Piernicola Pedicini, Laura Ferrara, Rolandas Paksas

on behalf of the EFDD Group

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European Parliament resolution on Gabon: repression of the opposition (2017/2830(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Gabon, notably that of 2 February 2017 on the rule of law crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Gabon¹,
- having regard to the joint statement issued on 24 September 2016 by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) and the Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica, following the announcement by the Gabonese Constitutional Court of the official results of the 2016 presidential election,
- having regard to the press release issued by the African Union on 1 September 2016 condemning the violence and calling for the peaceful resolution of the post-electoral conflict in Gabon,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of June 2017 on a renewed impetus for the Africa-EU Partnership,
- having regard to the joint statement of 11 September 2016 on Gabon by the spokespersons of the VP/HR, Federica Mogherini, and the Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica,
- having regard to the EU's intervention of 9 March 2017 at the 34th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, under Item 2 of the Interactive Dialogue with the High Commissioner,
- having regard to Resolution 359(LIX) 2016 of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Human Rights Situation in the Gabonese Republic of 4 November 2016,
- having regard to the Gabonese Constitution,
- having regard to the revised Cotonou Partnership Agreement,
- having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of June 1981,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of December 1966,
- having regard to the final report of the EU Electoral Observation Mission,

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0017.

- having regard to the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance,
 - having regard to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the August 2016 presidential elections in Gabon raised allegations of a rigged vote; whereas in the days following the elections, the country’s parliament was razed by fire and several protesters were killed and hundreds arrested; whereas although the security situation has largely stabilised, political and social tensions remain high across the country and are compounded by a poor economic situation;
 - B. whereas one of the characteristics of a democracy is respect for the constitution, which underlies the state, the institutions and the rule of law; whereas peaceful, credible and transparent elections in Gabon would have contributed greatly to addressing the challenge of democratic progress and alternation of power faced by the Central African region; whereas Gabon’s parliamentary elections, originally scheduled for December 2016, have been postponed twice to April 2018, beyond the constitutional deadline;
 - C. whereas in Gabon since, in particular the post-electoral violence in August 2016, during which arrests, killings and enforced disappearances took place, as has been reported by several international and non-governmental organisations; whereas Gabon has witnessed an increase in political violence, especially in the capital, Libreville, where several homes belonging to members of the political opposition were reportedly attacked;
 - D. whereas the authorities have clamped down on members of the opposition and of civil society opposing the power in place; whereas human rights groups continuously report on the worsening situation with regard to human rights and freedom of expression and assembly, including the use of excessive force against peaceful demonstrators, arbitrary arrests and detentions, and politically motivated trials;
 - E. whereas numerous allegations before and after the 2016 elections have linked Ali Bongo’s regime to human rights violations such as arbitrary arrest and long-term detention in inhuman conditions, torture, extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances of civilians and journalists who have expressed opposition to his regime or his re-election;
 - F. whereas Gabon is a party to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, is in the process of implementing its provisions into national law and has the obligation to share with the United Nations information concerning the progress made since the ratification of the Convention in 2011 and about the post-electoral events in 2016; whereas the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances is currently considering Gabon’s report and reviewing the progress of this implementation;
 - G. whereas President Ali Bongo launched a ‘national dialogue’ as part of efforts to resolve the crisis sparked by his re-election, which was attended by representatives from 1 200 groups from civil society, and around 50 political parties according to Prime Minister Emmanuel Issoze Ngondet; whereas the talks were boycotted by Jean Ping and other main

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opposition leaders;

- H. whereas on 18 August 2017 presidential candidate Jean Ping launched an appeal to the people of Gabon for ‘civil disobedience’ and called for the president to be ousted;
 - I. whereas dozens of people have been detained in recent weeks on the fringes of peaceful, unauthorised demonstrations in support of Jean Ping, and several of them remain in detention;
 - J. whereas on 2 September 2017, political opposition leader and former presidential candidate Jean Ping and the leaders of more than twenty opposition parties were prevented from leaving the country without having been notified of this restriction and without any list of individuals affected having been published; whereas this measure was lifted on 8 September;
 - K. whereas the government has forbidden political opponents who contest the victory of Ali Bongo to speak in public and private media;
 - L. whereas individual cases targeting several high-profile Gabonese individuals have been filed before French courts with regard to serious human rights violations and ‘ill-gotten gains’ (biens mal-acquis);
 - M. whereas the French judiciary has just concluded an investigation into ill-gotten gains from Gabon invested in France and has identified and seized goods worth between 50 and 60 million euros following complaints filed by the French branch of Transparency International and a Gabonese national; whereas the inquiry revealed that a bank account used to acquire goods in France for the Bongo family also received a payment of 1.3 million euros;
 - N. whereas the EU Election Observation Mission (EOM), invited by the Gabonese Government to monitor the presidential elections, concluded in its final report that the election process, and specifically the consolidation of the election results and the appeals process, lacked transparency; whereas the EOM concluded that these anomalies call into question the integrity of the process of consolidating the results and the final result of the election;
1. Recalls that Gabon made a commitment under the Cotonou Agreement to respect democracy, the rule of law and human rights principles, which include freedom of expression, assembly and access to the media, good governance and transparency in political office;
 2. Reminds Gabon of its duties and responsibilities as a State Party, including to provide clear and tangible information on the reforms undertaken since the ratification, on the post-electoral violence, and on action taken to establish the truth and ensure that those responsible are brought to justice;
 3. Underlines the fundamental role the opposition plays in a democratic society; strongly

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condemns the pressure and intimidation being exerted on the opposition in Gabon; deems it unacceptable that several leaders of the Gabon opposition, including the candidate in the 2016 presidential election, Jean Ping, were denied temporarily the right to leave the country; recalls that Gabonese law provides for this exceptional measure only for persons under criminal investigation; considers this measure, therefore, to be of an arbitrary nature;

4. Strongly condemns the constant threats, attacks, use of force and severe restrictions and intimidations faced by the opposition, human rights defenders and journalists in Gabon; calls on the authorities to respect the opposition's right to a peaceful protest and immediately release anyone still wrongfully held, to stop all harassment, intimidation and persecution of the opposition and to take concrete measures in order to guarantee freedom of expression;
5. Urges the Government of Gabon to conduct a thorough and expeditious reform of the electoral framework, taking account of the recommendations made by the EU EOM, in order to improve it and make it fully transparent and credible; stresses that the Gabonese authorities must guarantee full and sincere cooperation with all relevant national and international stakeholders in order to ensure that the next parliamentary elections, already overdue, are fully transparent and credible and take place in a free, democratic, inclusive and peaceful environment;
6. Recognises that an Intensified Political Dialogue between the EU and Gabon is ongoing, in accordance with the provisions of the Cotonou Agreement; urges all parties involved to cooperate fully and to work towards a tangible success of this process;
7. Voices reservations about the inclusivity and therefore the credibility and relevance of the national dialogue initiated by the government; notes that Jean Ping and his Coalition for the New Republic declined to take part in the dialogue;
8. Believes that the current deep political and social divisions in Gabon require a clear political response in order to preserve the stability of the country, to increase Gabonese citizens' confidence and to give real legitimacy to the institutions; calls for an international inquiry, led by the UN, into the elections and the abuses that have been committed since, in order to determine how to establish a political dialogue enabling the crisis to be resolved, while guaranteeing the democratic rights of the Gabonese people;
9. Strongly urges France in particular, owing to its strong and historic ties to Gabon, to make use of all its political and economic leverage towards the Gabonese Government and to play a constructive role in the EU institutions in this regard;
10. Calls on the Delegation of the European Union to Gabon to continue its close monitoring of developments in Gabon and to use all appropriate tools, instruments and the Intensified Political Dialogue to promote the essential elements of the Cotonou Agreement and to support pro-democracy movements;

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11. Calls on the VP/HR, the Commission and the Member States to review their policies towards Gabon and to consider targeted sanctions for individuals responsible for the electoral fraud and the subsequent violence perpetrated in Gabon;
12. Reiterates its call on the Gabonese Government to put in place a judicial regime and a sanction regime which would ensure that arrests and sentences are proportionate to the seriousness of the crime;
13. Urges the government to respond concretely to the concerns of the international community by launching a prompt, genuinely inclusive, transparent and impartial consultative forum for dialogue; calls also on the opposition to assess the credibility of such a process;
14. Calls on all political actors to show responsibility and restraint, and in particular to refrain from inciting violence;
15. Calls on the participants of the next EU-Africa Summit in Abidjan to put the situation in Gabon on the agenda and to remind Gabon of its commitments towards human rights, democracy and the rule of law;
16. Welcomes the investigation conducted in France on the ill-gotten gains from Gabon and expresses its hope that all those involved in illegal activities will be brought to justice; calls for the utmost transparency regarding the 1.3 million euro payment made into a French bank account linked to the Bongo family;
17. 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 African Union, the President and Parliament of Gabon, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the UN Human Rights Council and the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly.