

Eastern Chad

European Parliament resolution of 13 December 2007 on eastern Chad

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on human rights in Chad,
 - having regard to its resolution of 27 September 2007 on the ESDP operation in Chad and the Central African Republic¹,
 - having regard to UN Security Council Resolution 1778 (2007) of 25 September 2007, which provides for the deployment of a multidimensional international presence in eastern Chad and the north-eastern Central African Republic (CAR) including the ESDP mission EUFOR TCHAD/RCA,
 - having regard to the Council joint action 2007/677/CFSP of 15 October 2007 on the European Union military operation in the Republic of Chad and in the Central African Republic² (EUFOR TCHAD/RCA),
 - having regard to UN Security Council Resolution 1769 (2007) of 31 July 2007 establishing, for an initial period of 12 months an African Union/United Nations (AU/UN) hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID),
 - having regard to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000 on women, peace and security,
 - having regard to Rule 115 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on 26 November 2007 hundreds of Chadian rebel fighters were killed along Chad's eastern border by the Chadian army, and on 3 December 2007 the Chadian army launched another offensive against Chadian rebel forces,
- B. whereas the armed struggle between the Chadian army and the rebels of the Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD) and Rally of Forces for Change (RFC) has resumed after the fragile peace deal which unravelled at the end of November 2007; whereas the rebel groups, government officials and foreign observers all confirm that the battles which have taken place since 26 November 2007 have been the harshest in Chad since President Idriss Deby Itno took power in December 1990,
- C. whereas about 238 000 refugees from Sudan, 44 600 refugees from the CAR and 170 000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) are hosted in twelve camps along Chad's eastern border with Sudan,

¹ Texts adopted, P6_TA(2007)0419.

² OJ L 279, 23.10.2007, p. 21.

- D. whereas the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) issued a warning on 4 December 2007 that the surge in fighting in eastern Chad between government forces and rebels over the past ten days has limited UN access to camps that are home to hundreds of thousands of refugees and IDPs and has heightened tensions in the area,
- E. whereas the fighting is hampering the operations of the World Food Programme (WFP) in eastern Chad, denying it access to some refugee camps and delaying food dispatches to others; whereas the fighting near Farchana, where three refugee camps are located, has made humanitarian operations particularly difficult; whereas on at least one occasion a WFP-contracted truck loaded with WFP food was attacked by armed bandits;
- F. whereas the fighting has been concentrated mainly in the Farchana, Iriba, Biltine and Guereda areas, located to the north and east of the major town of Abeché, the main operational base for at least twelve refugee camps; whereas the areas near refugee camps to the south of Abeché such as Goz Beida have also become less secure,
- G. whereas according to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), humanitarian aid activities are being threatened mostly by armed robbery and banditry in the region, and military offensives are exacerbating crime; whereas the increasing incidence of banditry in eastern Chad is forcing humanitarian agencies to reduce staff and movements in key towns, further restricting their ability to provide much-needed humanitarian assistance,
- H. whereas the Chadian President very recently sacked the United Front for Change's leader Mahamat Nour Abdelkerim as defence minister, indicating tensions and fallout at governmental level,
- I. whereas on 15 October 2007 the Council adopted the above mentioned joint action on the operation EUFOR TCHAD/RCA, designed to contribute to protecting civilians in danger, particularly refugees and displaced persons, to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and the free movement of humanitarian personnel by helping to improve security in the area of operations, and to contribute to protecting UN personnel, facilities, installations and equipment and ensuring the security and freedom of movement for its staff and UN-associated personnel,
- J. whereas the calendar for the deployment of EUFOR TCHAD/RCA, which should have been launched before the end of November 2007, is gradually being put back; whereas it was presupposed that, once the rainy season subsided at the end of October 2007, the rebel groups would once again be more mobile and active in the region; whereas the Chadian intelligence chief has accused Sudan of arming the rebels,
- K. whereas any domestic instability in Chad - together with the insecurity of the border region of eastern Chad, Darfur and the CAR - will also have a negative effect and impact on the EUFOR TCHAD/RCA operation once it is deployed,
- L. whereas international concerns over the conflict have heightened since the UFDD threatened to attack the French or any other foreign force deployed in the EUFOR TCHAD/RCA mission,

- M. whereas the war crime of sexual violence, including rape being used as a tool of war, is prevalent in refugee camps and elsewhere in the conflict region, with women and girls being most vulnerable to attack,
1. Emphasises that the recent violence and unrest in Chad demonstrate the urgent need for the deployment of EUFOR TCHAD/RCA without further delay; underlines that the EU Member States and the UN have a 'responsibility to protect' refugees and internally displaced persons in the region; stresses that these forces must have and use all means necessary, in full compliance with international human rights and humanitarian law, to protect civilians at risk;
 2. Regrets, however, the fact that this mission still lacks equipment vital for enabling troops to carry out their duties, such as helicopters and medical supplies;
 3. Calls on the institutions of the EU and its Member States to honour the political decision made and to provide the mission with more troops and appropriate financial, logistic and air support, including the necessary number of helicopters, as soon as possible; underscores that the EU's credibility in its foreign policy on the world stage is at stake if it cannot mobilise sufficient troops and equipment to make this mission operational;
 4. Calls on the Council and Commission to update it on current initiatives (such as those within the European Defence Agency) to address capability gaps in key areas and specifically on helicopters and medical support units, and to put forward joint proposals for short-term and longer-term solutions for guaranteed access to such capabilities for both humanitarian as well as ESDP purposes;
 5. Emphasises the regional dimension of the Darfur crisis and the urgent need to address its destabilising impact on the humanitarian and security situation in neighbouring countries, and reiterates its willingness to carry out the EU military bridging operation in support of a multidimensional UN presence;
 6. Recalls its above mentioned resolution of 27 September 2007 endorsing the launch of an ESDP operation in eastern Chad and the northern CAR, and urges the Council and Commission to speed up the decision-making process for the launching of this operation in order to ensure that the first deployment of soldiers starts before the end of 2007 and the mission reaches its full potential by February or early March 2008;
 7. Welcomes the Commission funding of over EUR 50 million for the mission, including EUR 10 million from the Instrument for Stability for the UN police training component of the peace-keeping operation; observes that this is evidence of a coherent interinstitutional EU approach to European security and defence policy;
 8. Deplores the President of Sudan's insistence that the UNAMID force, which EUFOR TCHAD/RCA is due to bolster, should be exclusively African in nature, contrary to the relevant resolution of the UN Security Council; emphasises the need to speed up the deployment of the UN-AU peacekeeping force for Darfur; urges the government of Sudan to cooperate with the International Criminal Court (ICC), and suggests the inclusion in the mandate of hybrid powers to search and arrest those against whom the ICC has issued arrest warrants;

9. Notes an escalation of deliberate and targeted attacks on the civilian population by Janjaweed militia crossing over from Sudan and by local Chadian Arab and some non-Arab groups; notes the extent of gender-based violence, harassment, intimidation and rape which is occurring in this region with complete impunity; calls on the Chadian authorities to investigate the reports of rape and other serious human rights violations and abuses and bring the perpetrators to justice;
10. Emphasises the particular issue of sexual exploitation in this conflict region and underlines the importance of Member States which contribute forces to UNAMID and EUFOR TCHAD/RCA being made aware of this abuse and adopting a gender-sensitive approach at all stages of response to sexual violence in conflict, including training to address the particular needs of victims; emphasises that it is the responsibility of countries contributing troops and police to peacekeeping operations to ensure that strong codes of conduct and proper training are implemented and that there is accountability for sexual violence; notes that increasing the deployment of women in peacekeeping has been shown to contribute not only to better relations with host communities, but also to better conduct by peacekeepers;
11. Is highly concerned by aid workers' reports that both rebels and the government have visited refugee camps to recruit children to their forces;
12. Urges the EU to press for a comprehensive peace process, using pressure and incentives to encourage all parties to return to the negotiating table, and for talks to address all levels of conflict currently taking place in Chad, including tensions between government and rebels and interethnic conflict;
13. Urges Chad, in cooperation with Sudan and Libya, to create the necessary conditions for a lasting political solution in implementation of the Sirte peace accord, and urges the governments of Sudan and Chad to fulfil their obligations under the Tripoli and Sirte agreements;
14. Expresses its concern over the increase in illegal sales and smuggling of weapons, notably illicit small arms and light weapons;
15. Recalls that no peacekeeping mission in the eastern part of Chad and the northern part of the CAR can be successful without a genuine political reconciliation process;
16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the African Union, the UN Secretary-General, the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and the Presidents, Governments and Parliaments of Chad, the Central African Republic and Sudan.