



TEXTS ADOPTED

P8_TA(2016)0422

Situation in Northern Iraq/Mosul

European Parliament resolution of 27 October 2016 on the situation in Northern Iraq/Mosul (2016/2956(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolutions of 27 February 2014 on the situation in Iraq¹, of 18 September 2014 on the situation in Iraq and Syria, and the IS offensive, including the persecution of minorities², of 12 February 2015 on the humanitarian crisis in Iraq and Syria, in particular in the IS context³, of 12 March 2015 on recent attacks and abductions by ISIS/Da'esh in the Middle East, notably of Assyrians⁴, and of 4 February 2016 on the systematic mass murder of religious minorities by the so-called 'ISIS/Daesh'⁵,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 23 May 2016 on the EU Regional Strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the Da'esh threat, of 14 December 2015 on Iraq, of 16 March 2015 on the EU Regional Strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the ISIS/Da'esh threat, of 20 October 2014 on the ISIS/Da'esh crisis in Syria and Iraq, of 30 August 2014 on Iraq and Syria, of 14 April 2014 and 12 October 2015 on Syria, and of 15 August 2014 on Iraq,
- 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) on Iraq and Syria,
- having regard to Resolution 2091 (2016) 'Foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq', adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 27 January 2016,
- having regard to the ministerial meeting for the stabilisation of Mosul bringing together 22 countries, the UN, the EU and the Arab League and co-chaired by France and Iraq, held in Paris on 20 October 2016 with the aim of coming up with a plan to protect civilians, distribute aid and address questions about governing areas newly liberated from ISIS/Daesh,
- having regard to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998 and its

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0171.

² OJ C 234, 28.6.2016, p. 25.

³ OJ C 310, 25.8.2016, p. 35.

⁴ OJ C 316, 30.8.2016, p. 113.

⁵ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0051.

provisions on jurisdiction with respect to the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression,

- having regard to the Charter of the United Nations,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Iraqi army, with the support of the global anti-ISIS/Daesh coalition and the Peshmerga forces of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) and Popular Mobilization Forces, has launched an operation to liberate Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, and many towns and villages in the 'Mosul corridor' from ISIS/Daesh;
 - B. whereas ISIS/Daesh imposed a draconian regime in Mosul; whereas inhabitants who have managed to escape recently report that people are starving and desperate to be liberated;
 - C. whereas the Nineveh Plain, Tal Afar and Sinjar, as well as the wider region, have been the ancestral homeland of Christians (Chaldeans/Syriacs/Assyrians), Yazidis, Sunni and Shia Arabs, Kurds, Shabak, Turkmen, Kaka'i, Sabaeen-Mandaeans, and others where they lived for centuries in a spirit of general pluralism, stability and communal cooperation despite periods of external violence and persecution, until the beginning of this century and the occupation of much of the region by ISIS/Daesh in 2014;
 - D. whereas Mosul has been a multi-ethnic city where a Sunni-Arab majority has lived side by side with Chaldeans/Syriacs/Assyrians, Kurds, Yazidis, Shabak, Kakai and Turkmens (Shia and Sunni); whereas the areas surrounding the city also have a history of ethno-religious diversity, with a concentration of Christians on the Nineveh plains, Yazidis around the Sinjar mountains and Muslim Turkmens in Tal Afar; whereas Christians in Iraq numbered over 1,5 million in 2003 but have dwindled to less than 200 000-350 000 today, many of them living in poverty; whereas the presence of Christians and other minorities in Iraq has traditionally had a great social importance, contributing significantly to political stability, and whereas the extinction of these minorities in the region will have a further destabilising effect;
 - E. whereas Parliament, which recognised on 4 February 2016 that ISIS/Daesh is committing genocide against Christians and Yazidis and other religious and ethnic minorities, has been joined by the Council of Europe, the US State Department, the US Congress, the UK Parliament, the Australian Parliament and other nations and institutions in recognising that the atrocities perpetrated by ISIS/Daesh against religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq include war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide;
 - F. whereas, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), some 3,3 million Iraqis have been uprooted by war since 2014 and more than 1,5 million people are at imminent risk of displacement in Mosul as a direct result of the operation to retake the area;
 - G. whereas the UNHCR has five camps open and is ready to shelter 45 000 people fleeing Mosul and the surrounding areas, with the organisation planning to have a total of 11 camps open in the coming weeks, with capacity for 120 000 people, provided land can be set aside in safe areas away from the frontlines; whereas the UNHCR's Mosul response budget is currently just over 38 % funded; whereas funding is needed not just for initial preparation but also for addressing the widespread displacement, which could last

throughout the winter;

- H. whereas the necessary security conditions should be ensured for all those who have been forced to leave their homeland or have been forcibly displaced, to make effective their right to return to their homelands as soon as possible;
 - I. whereas the Cooperation Council under the EU-Iraq PCA met for the second time in Brussels on 18 October 2016 to discuss Iraq's immediate humanitarian and stabilisation challenges; whereas the EU has provided EUR 134 million to date in humanitarian aid in Iraq, EUR 50 million of it for Mosul;
 - J. whereas it is important to ensure security for all communities, including Chaldeans/Syriacs/Assyrians and others at risk in the Nineveh Plains;
 - K. whereas Article 2 of the Iraqi Constitution 'guarantees the full religious rights of all individuals to freedom of religious belief and practice';
 - L. whereas Article 125 of the Iraqi Constitution guarantees 'the administrative, political, cultural, and educational rights of the various nationalities, such as Turkmen, Chaldeans, Assyrians, and all other constituents'; whereas the Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi stated on 15 April 2015 that 'if we don't decentralise, the country will disintegrate. To me, there are no limitations to decentralisation';
 - M. whereas maximum autonomy and security protection for the communities of the Nineveh Plain, Tal Afar and Sinjar within the framework of the federal Republic of Iraq would restore and preserve the fundamental human rights, including property rights, of the indigenous peoples of that region;
1. Strongly supports the operation started by Iraq to liberate Mosul from ISIS/Daesh; sees this operation as a decisive part of an ongoing, global effort to inflict a lasting defeat on ISIS/Daesh; expresses its confidence that Iraq will prevail in this fight against a common enemy and liberate Mosul and other parts of the country from the ISIS/Daesh presence;
 2. Reaffirms its full support for Iraq's independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty and its right to take the steps necessary to preserve these;
 3. Is concerned about the recent tensions between regional actors; calls for the full respect of Iraq's territorial integrity and sovereignty and for no military action to be taken in Iraq without the consent of the Iraqi Government; stresses the importance of fostering dialogue between Iraq and the countries in the region with the aim of building a more secure Middle East;
 4. Recalls that the Iraqi authorities must take concrete steps to protect civilians during the campaign, including by exercising effective command and control over militias and by taking all feasible precautions to avoid civilian casualties and human rights violations during the assault; stresses that the forces on the ground have to abide by international humanitarian and human rights law during their operations;
 5. Expresses its support for the Republic of Iraq and its people in recognising a politically, socially and economically viable and sustainable province in the Nineveh Plain, Tal Afar and Sinjar regions, consistent with lawful expressions of regional autonomy by its indigenous peoples;

6. Stresses that the right of return to their ancestral homeland for the displaced indigenous peoples of the Nineveh Plain, Tal Afar and Sinjar – many of whom are displaced within Iraq – should be a policy priority of the Iraqi Government supported by the EU, including its Member States, and the international community; emphasises that, with the support of the Government of Iraq and the Kurdish Regional Government, these peoples should have their fundamental human rights fully restored, including their property rights which should supersede any claims of property rights by others;
7. Stresses that the indigenous communities of the Nineveh Plain, Tal Afar and Sinjar – Christians (Chaldeans/Syriacs/Assyrians), Yazidis, Turkmens and others – have a right to safety, security and regional autonomy within the federal structure of the Republic of Iraq;
8. Strongly condemns the ongoing violence and mass executions by ISIS/Daesh in Iraq; expresses its deep concern at the continual reports on ISIS/Daesh's use of children, the elderly, women and vulnerable persons as shields against the ongoing military liberation operations taking place in Northern Iraq;
9. Takes note of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator's wake-up call regarding the lack of adequate funding in the face of a possible humanitarian emergency on an unprecedented scale arising from the Mosul offensive; welcomes the EU's engagement in Iraq, notably its past humanitarian aid efforts and the removal of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which will be essential to enable the swift return of the refugees and IDPs; nonetheless calls urgently on the EU and its Member States to step up efforts for stabilisation of the liberated areas;
10. Urges the Government of Iraq and its international partners to make the peaceful resolution of questions pertaining to the Republic of Iraq's disputed internal boundaries a priority;
11. Calls on all parties to the conflict to abide by international humanitarian law during and after hostilities and, in the conflict, to abide by the principles of proportionality, distinction and precaution; urges all parties to the conflict to open humanitarian corridors in order to allow and help civilians to flee the conflict, to avoid civilians remaining trapped in Mosul and being used by ISIS/Daesh as human shields, to provide access to safety and humanitarian assistance, and guarantee assistance and protection for civilians during the security screening process, in accordance with national and international standards, in particular to ensure that families are not separated and that children are not put at risk, and to establish a UN third-party monitoring mechanism; calls, in particular, for all the necessary precautions to be taken to ensure that children and their families are protected from bombing, and to minimise casualties and protect civilian infrastructure, notably schools and hospitals;
12. Urges all the actors fighting ISIS/Daesh in the Republic of Iraq to develop sustainable, long-term and inclusive political cooperation and dialogue in order to provide the foundation for an Iraq free of radical and extremist movements; calls for the EU and its Member States, the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, the international community and international actors to work with the national and regional governments of the Republic of Iraq towards a sustainable security settlement in the Nineveh Plain, Tal Afar and Sinjar;
13. Calls for the European Union, the United Nations and the entire international community to work with the national and regional governments of the Republic of Iraq to oversee the

reintegration of all the Iraqis and ethnic and religious minorities who have been displaced;

14. Calls on the EEAS, the Member States and the international community to give their practical and diplomatic support to a sustainable and inclusive post-conflict structure for the region, with particular reference to the possibility of an autonomous province including the Nineveh Plain, Sinjar and Tal Afar, to be politically presented by the indigenous peoples of the region; reiterates the importance of involving faith-based relief organisations in coordinated humanitarian action, especially for displaced ethnic and religious minorities;
15. Encourages the EU and its Member States and the international community to offer technical assistance to the Government of Iraq in implementing the decision to create a Nineveh Plain Province, in accordance with its Cabinet decision of 21 January 2014, and in further de-centralising by also establishing provinces in Tal Afar and Sinjar and supporting the new provincial administrations to attain their full potential;
16. Calls on the EEAS to offer its good offices in the post-liberation negotiations with the KRG and Iraqi Government with a view to ensuring that the ethnic minority groups in the region, notably Christians (Chaldeans/Syriacs/Assyrians), Yazidis, Turkmens, Shabak and Kaka'i, are granted their legitimate rights and are included in a new administrative set-up in order to prevent the outbreak of new conflicts;
17. Encourages the EU Member States, in cooperation with the Iraqi Government, to add local security forces to the list of forces authorised to receive assistance; believes that local security forces should include local forces that are committed to protecting highly vulnerable ethnic and religious minority communities in the Nineveh Plain, Tal Afar, Sinjar and elsewhere from the threat of jihadi-salafism;
18. Recalls that saving civilian lives and respecting international humanitarian law is a fundamental political cornerstone of reconciliation and development, the only way to defeat hatred and division, and that it is essential not to fuel further tensions among communities and to lay the ground for a stable and prosperous Iraq;
19. Urges the Iraq-led military coalition to take all the necessary measures to preserve the evidence of the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by ISIS/Daesh in order to ensure accountability;
20. Stresses the vital importance of timely and effective provision of safety, through genuine safe routes where protection can be sustained, including through de-mining and the re-establishment of the rule of law, and basic services, such as healthcare, electricity and education, in the liberated areas; warns that failure to provide basic services, safety and a long-term strategy on tackling root causes and social cohesion efforts could lead to the re-emergence of extremist forces; calls, therefore, for a strong humanitarian aid and development cooperation nexus in order to guarantee an aid continuum from humanitarian aid to stabilisation, resilience and development of Iraq;
21. Underlines the importance of Mosul for the whole of Iraq and calls for the representation of minorities in a new Mosul administration; stresses the legitimate right of ethnic and religious minorities to political participation and to having their property rights restored; calls for peaceful co-existence and full respect for the rights of the different ethnic and religious minorities that have historically had a strong presence and lived peacefully

alongside one another – particularly Yazidis in the Sinjar mountains, Chaldeans/Syriacs/Assyrians on the Nineveh Plain and Turkmen in Tel Afar and in parts of the Kirkuk Governorate; calls also for measures to guarantee the safe return of displaced refugees;

22. Urges the Iraqi Government, with support from the EU and its Member States, to provide means for de-mining areas formerly occupied by ISIS/Daesh and to work in cooperation with local councils representing the minorities in order to secure functioning coordination and avoid delays that would prevent the return of refugees and IDPs;
23. Emphasises the need to continue to fight the further spread in the region and beyond of Islamist-jihadist ideologies, including Salafi jihadism which serves as a theological and political instigation for ISIS/Daesh's crimes, including after the liberation of Mosul; calls on the EU Member States to push for referral to the International Criminal Court of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Iraq, Syria, Libya and elsewhere by ISIS/Daesh;
24. 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 EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Council of Representatives of Iraq, the Regional Government of Kurdistan, and the United Nations Secretary-General.