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Somalia

European Parliament resolution on the routine killing of civilians in Somalia

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on human rights abuses in Somalia,
 - having regard to statements made by the EU Council Presidency on the recent Djibouti peace agreement,
 - having regard to reports from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressing concern about the persisting humanitarian catastrophe in Somalia,
 - having regard to the African Union (AU) initiatives and statements vis-à-vis the situation in Somalia,
 - having regard to the plan for national reconciliation put forward in UN Security Council Resolution 1744 (2007), adopted on 20 February 2007, in the aftermath of the victory by Ethiopia over the Union of Islamic Courts,
 - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. concerned by the prolonged civil war in Somalia and its implications for the peace and reconciliation process in that country, as well as for the security and stability of the Horn of Africa as a whole,
- B. whereas an estimated 100 people have been killed and thousands have fled their homes in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, in recent days, following renewed fighting between troops of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and insurgents, as a result of the rejection by some Islamist leaders of the UN-brokered, three-month ceasefire deal signed in Djibouti by the TFG and the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS),
- C. whereas members of civil society in Somalia, in particular the media, have been singled out for attack and assassination, and deploring the brutal, targeted murder of Nasteh Dahir Farah, Vice-President of the National Union of Somali Journalists, who was gunned down in the southern town of Kismayu (Somalia) on Saturday, 7 June 2008,
- D. whereas 15 aid workers have been killed since early 2008, including a prominent Somali aid worker, the head of the local Woman and Child Care aid agency, Mohamed Mahdi, who was shot in Mogadishu by unidentified gunmen,
- E. whereas the UN Secretary-General has expressed concern at the increase in the recruitment of child soldiers, particularly in Mogadishu, and the widespread use of children in almost all fighting forces in Somalia,
- F. whereas widespread human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict, specifically torture and other ill-treatment, rape, extrajudicial

executions, arbitrary detention, and attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, continue to take place in Somalia,

- G. whereas the continuing conflict and political instability in Somalia have given rise to acts of piracy and armed robbery,
- H. whereas, since February 2007, some 856 970 Somalis have fled fighting in Mogadishu, and 2.6 million Somalis - about 35% of the population - are in need of humanitarian assistance, a figure which could rise to 3.5 million by the end of the year,
- I. whereas the UN Secretary-General urged the Ethiopian forces to refrain from indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian objects, including attacks on schools and hospitals, and called on the Ethiopian authorities to investigate allegations of grave violations against children by their forces,
- J. whereas the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution on 15 May 2008, calling for the possible deployment of a 28 500-strong UN peacekeeping force, pending an improvement in political and security conditions on the ground; whereas the proposed UN force would replace a small contingent of AU peacekeepers deployed in Somalia since March 2007,
 - 1. Strongly condemns the continued fighting, targeted killings and other serious violations of human rights committed by all parties to the conflict, which has caused the loss of life of numerous Somali civilians and a humanitarian catastrophe;
 - 2. Calls on all sides to the conflict immediately to halt all violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, stop attacks targeting civilians, cease all use of death threats, rape, unlawful arrest, kidnapping, intimidation and looting of civilians, and fully abide by the provisions of Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions;
 - 3. Calls for the liberation of the two Italian members and one Somali member of the agricultural NGO Cooperazione Italiana Nord Sud , Jolanda Occhipinti, Giuliano Paganini and Abdirahaman Yussuf Harale, kidnapped on 21 May 2008 around 60 km south of Mogadishu, for whom a ransom of USD 1 000 000 has been demanded;
 - 4. Calls for investigations into all cases of human rights violations, including grave violations of children's rights; urges the TFG to end the detention of children and to control the proliferation of small arms;
 - 5. Urges all sides to the conflict to take all the necessary steps to ensure unimpeded humanitarian access and assistance to affected populations in the country, and to take effective measures to ensure the safety of local and international humanitarian workers;
 - 6. Welcomes the peace deal reached between the TFG and ARS at the inter-Somali talks in Djibouti on 9 June 2008, facilitated by the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, the AU and other regional organisations and international partners; urges the TFG to engage in a genuine reconciliation process with all parties to the conflict within the country to create the conditions for peace, security and stability;
 - 7. Calls for the strengthening of the role of civil society, particularly that of women and children, in the process of national reconciliation;

8. Calls on the TFG, in collaboration with the UN and the AU, to use all available means to prevent, deter and suppress piracy and armed robbery committed from the Somali coast against vessels, especially those carrying humanitarian aid;
9. Calls on the EU to urge the Kenyan Government to allow Somali refugees asylum and uphold their rights to assistance, and calls on the Kenyan Government to allow unimpeded humanitarian access through the El Wak crossing;
10. Calls on all donors, and the EU in particular, to increase the provision of humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons and to guarantee effective development aid to the Somali population;
11. Calls on the Commission to ensure that EU aid is not being misappropriated to re-empower warlords who have been absorbed into transnational federal institutions, and to take steps to rectify this if necessary;
12. Calls on the UN Security Council to strengthen the UN arms embargo on Somalia and take more determined action to ensure that the embargo is fully respected by states in the region; calls on the UN Security Council to investigate and impose targeted sanctions, including possible referral to the International Criminal Court, on all individuals accused of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Somalia;
13. Welcomes UN Security Council Resolution 1814 (2008), adopted unanimously on 15 May 2008, calling for the possible deployment of a 28 500-strong UN peacekeeping force, pending an improvement in political and security conditions on the ground; notes that the proposed UN force would replace a small contingent of AU peacekeepers deployed in Somalia since March 2007;
14. Strongly urges that the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and any subsequent UN peacekeeping mission be mandated to protect civilians, including women, children and internally displaced persons, and include a strong human rights component, with the capacity to monitor, investigate and report human rights violations;
15. Reiterates its support for the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, in his efforts to coordinate the action of the international community and to facilitate inter-Somali political dialogue, as well as in stabilising the situation in Somalia through the deployment of AMISOM;
16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Member States, the Secretaries-General of the AU, the UN and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the President of the TFG, the Government of Ethiopia and the Pan-African Parliament.