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Recent violence in Iraq

European Parliament resolution of 10 October 2013 on recent violence in Iraq (2013/2874(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Iraq, notably that of 14 March 2013 on ‘Iraq: the plight of minority groups, including the Iraqi Turkmen’¹,
 - having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Iraq, of the other part, and to its resolution of 17 January 2013 on the EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement²,
 - having regard to the Commission’s Joint Strategy Paper for Iraq (2011-2013),
 - having regard to the ‘Report on Human Rights in Iraq: January to June 2012’, presented jointly by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on 19 December 2012,
 - having regard to the International Crisis Group’s Middle East Report N°144 of 14 August 2013 entitled ‘[Make or Break: Iraq’s Sunnis and the State](#)’
 - having regard to the UN casualty figures for September, released on 1 October 2013,
 - having regard to the statement of 29 July 2013 by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, urging leaders to pull Iraq ‘back from the brink’,
 - having regard to the statement of 1 September 2013 by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the tragic events in Camp Ashraf which killed 52 people,
 - having regard to the 1981 UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief,
 - having regard to the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iraq is a party,
 - having regard to the statement of 5 September 2013 by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, on the recent violence in Iraq,
 - having regard to Rules 122(5) and 110(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Iraq continues to face serious political, security and socioeconomic challenges, and whereas its political scene is extremely fragmented and plagued by violence and

¹ P7_TA(2013)0101.

² P7_TA(2013)0022.

sectarian politics, to the severe detriment of the legitimate aspirations of the Iraqi people for peace, prosperity and a genuine transition to democracy;

- B. whereas, according to casualty figures released by the UNAMI, a total of 979 Iraqis were killed, and another 2 133 wounded, in acts of terrorism and violence in September 2013; whereas Baghdad was the worst-affected governorate in September 2013, with 1 429 civilian casualties (418 killed and 1 011 injured), followed by Ninewa, Diyala, Salahuddin and Anbar; whereas Kirkuk, Erbil, Babil, Wasit, Dhi-Qar and Basra also reported casualties;
 - C. whereas the impact of violence on civilians remains disturbingly high and is still growing, with up to 5 000 civilians having been killed, and up to 10 000 injured, since the beginning of 2013 – the highest figure in the last five years;
 - D. whereas serious social and economic problems – widespread poverty, high unemployment, economic stagnation, environmental degradation and a lack of basic public services – continue to affect a large proportion of the population; whereas numerous peaceful demonstrations demanding more social, economic and political rights continue to result in very systematic repression by the security forces, carried out with impunity;
 - E. whereas the Iraqi constitution guarantees equality before the law for all citizens, along with the ‘administrative, political, cultural and educational rights of the various nationalities’;
 - F. whereas the EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, in particular its human rights clause, emphasises that the EU-Iraq political dialogue should focus on human rights and strengthening democratic institutions;
1. Strongly condemns the recent acts of terrorism and heightened sectarian violence, which carries the danger that the country will fall back into sectarian strife and is generating fears of wider sectarian conflict across the region; points out that although violence occurs along sectarian lines, its causes are political rather than religious;
 2. Extends its condolences to the families and friends of the deceased and injured;
 3. Condemns the recent attacks of: 3 September 2013, in which at least 60 people were killed in mainly Shia districts of Baghdad; 15 September 2013, in which more than 40 people were killed in blasts across Iraq, mostly targeting Shia areas; 21 September 2013, in which at least 60 people were killed at a funeral in Sadr City, Baghdad; 30 September 2013, in which at least 54 people were killed in car bomb blasts in mainly Shia areas of Baghdad; 5 October 2013, in which at least 51 people were killed and more than 70 injured in an attack in Baghdad by a suicide bomber targeting Shia pilgrims in the al-Adhamiya district, while at least 12 people were killed and at least 25 others wounded when another suicide bomber struck a café in Balad, north of Baghdad, on the same day; 6 October 2013, in which at least 12 children aged between 6 and 12 were killed, and many more injured, by a suicide bomber who struck next to a primary school in the Shia Turkmen village of Qabak; 7 October 2013, in which at least 22 people were killed in a fresh wave of explosions in Baghdad; and 8 October 2013, in which at least 9 people were killed by a car bomb in Baghdad and attacks on security forces in the north of the country;

4. Strongly condemns the attack on Camp Ashraf of 1 September 2013 by Iraqi forces, in which 52 Iranian refugees were killed, and 7 residents abducted, including 6 women who, as stated by Vice-President / High Representative Catherine Ashton, are believed to be held in Baghdad, and calls for their immediate and unconditional release; expresses its support for the work of the UNAMI, which is trying to relocate the 3 000 or so residents outside of Iraq;
5. Expresses its grave concern over the new surge of instability and calls on all Iraqi political leaders, from all ethnic and religious backgrounds, to work together to put an end to sectarian violence and distrust and to bring the Iraqi people together;
6. Calls on both the Government of Iraq and the regional governments to condemn the attacks and to facilitate a full and swift independent international investigation into the recent terrorist attacks in the region, and calls on the Iraqi Government to cooperate fully with that investigation in order to bring those responsible to justice;
7. Is concerned about the spill-over of violence from the conflict in Syria to Iraq, where jihadist rebels linked to the Islamic State of Iraq, a Sunni militant umbrella group that includes al-Qaeda, have risen to prominence;
8. Calls, as a matter of urgency, on political, religious and civil leaders and the security forces to start to work together to end the bloodshed and ensure that all Iraqi citizens feel equally protected;
9. Calls on the Iraqi Government and on all political leaders to take the necessary measures to provide security and protection for all people in Iraq, in particular members of vulnerable minorities; calls on the Iraqi Government to ensure that the security forces comply with the rule of law and international standards;
10. Calls on the international community and the EU to support the Iraqi Government by promoting initiatives for national dialogue, consolidation of the rule of law and the provision of basic services, with the goal of creating a secure, stable, unified, prosperous and democratic Iraq, in which the human and political rights of all people are protected;
11. Calls on the Iraqi authorities, given that the security situation has exacerbated problems for more vulnerable groups such as women, youth and fundamental rights activists, including trade unionists, to take urgent action to direct more resources towards programmes aimed at improving the situation;
12. Encourages religious dialogue between Sunni and Shia clerics as a necessary tool for conflict resolution; considers that the recent talks between the US and Iran also afford an opportunity for Iraq to act as a bridge, given that it is one of the few countries to have strong relations with both parties; calls on Iranian leaders to engage constructively in the stabilisation of the region;
13. 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 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, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the United Nations Human Rights Council.