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Plenary sitting

10.9.2013

B7-0424/2013

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Syria
(2013/2819(RSP))

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on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Syria
(2013/2819(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Charter of the United Nations,
 - having regard to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC),
 - having regard to International Humanitarian Law,
 - having regard to the Geneva Conventions on Refugees,
 - having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council statement of 6 September 2013,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, according to various sources, chemical weapons were used in Ghouta, in the outskirts of Damascus, on 21 August 2013, resulting in the death and injury of hundreds of people;
- B. whereas the identity of the perpetrators of the alleged chemical weapons attack remains unconfirmed; whereas it should be borne in mind that false claims regarding the existence of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq led the country into war and continuing tragedy, and whereas this should not be repeated;
- C. whereas a UN chemical weapons inspection team has collected samples at the site of the alleged chemical weapons use, and the process of analysis is taking place, adhering to the highest established standards of verification recognised by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW); whereas governments should not take a stance on the issue before the results are made known;
- D. whereas the US Administration and France are threatening to launch a military attack on Syria despite the absence of any decision by the United Nations Security Council;
- E. whereas NATO is already involved in the preparations for a military attack on Syria;
- F. whereas the situation around the land and sea borders of Syria and in the eastern Mediterranean is extremely volatile, given the presence of various armies and fleets in the region; whereas this could easily spill across the borders and into the whole turbulent area, with unpredictable consequences;
- G. whereas on Monday, 9 September 2013 the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said that it welcomed a Russian proposal to avert US military strikes by having Damascus turn over control of its chemical weapons to international monitors;

- H. whereas the conflict in Syria, which started in March 2011 with brutal repression by the Syrian regime against its population, has escalated into a civil and even sectarian war, with armed engagement between the Syrian military and security forces and various armed groups supported by outside forces and countries; whereas the daily bloodshed is accompanied by flagrant violations of humanitarian law and, according to UN estimates, has caused over 100 000 deaths and the flight of 7 million refugees and internally displaced persons;
- I. whereas, in May 2013, the EU lifted the arms embargo on Syria and this exacerbated the conflict as it increased the volume of weapons and equipment, including dual-use items, illegally transferred across Syria's borders to arm the various military groups; whereas, while the EU has over the past two years imposed targeted sanctions on Syria in several rounds, including a travel ban, an asset freeze, and a ban on exports of luxury goods and of dual-use goods to the country, these sanctions have produced no results in terms of a solution to the conflict;
- J. whereas the Geneva II Conference was postponed; whereas in recent days many countries and leaders have reiterated their support for a political solution to the Syrian conflict;
1. Strongly denounces the use of chemical weapons against the Syrian people, regardless of the perpetrator; insists that time should be given for the UN chemical weapons inspection team to complete their mission;
 2. Welcomes the statement by the Syrian Foreign Minister welcoming a Russian proposal to turn over control of its chemical weapons to international monitors, and calls for the implementation of this proposal;
 3. Insists that the allegations that the 'rebel forces' have been supplied with chemical weapons by Saudi Arabia should be investigated;
 4. Strongly opposes any military attack against Syria; opposes, in particular, the announced attack by the US and France without even a decision of the UN Security Council; stresses that such a move would constitute a violation of the UN Charter and further exacerbate the situation, with unpredictable consequences for the Middle East region as a whole;
 5. Insists that the future destiny of Syria must rest firmly in the hands of the Syrian people; supports a political solution to the conflict agreed by the Syrians, without any kind of foreign intervention, that would allow for an inclusive national dialogue aimed at effectively addressing the legitimate aspirations and concerns of the Syrian people for political and democratic changes;
 6. Calls for all interested parties and the permanent members of the UN Security Council to work towards the convening of the Geneva II Conference;
 7. Is strongly opposed to the use of the 'responsibility to protect' as an excuse to justify military intervention; stresses that the protection of human rights, the use of chemical weapons and WMD have been used in the past to justify wars against Yugoslavia and Iraq, and now a war against Syria;

8. Underlines the fact that in many countries a high percentage of the population opposes an attack against Syria, and urges governments to listen to their peoples' call for a peaceful political solution;
9. Is strongly opposed to plans to partition the country;
10. Supports all efforts to help in finding a peaceful solution to the Syrian conflict;
11. Stresses that the arms trade and the supply of weapons and even non-lethal equipment have exacerbated the conflict; calls on all countries to stop the supply of all types of weapons; calls on the Council to re-introduce the embargo on arms exports to Syria;
12. Calls for increased international support and assistance for refugees, both those internally displaced and those moving into neighbouring countries; raises the alarm with regard to the increased numbers of refugees risking their lives in open vessels fleeing to Europe, and asks for asylum and support be granted to them;
13. Calls on the Council to take the lead in convening an international conference for the prohibition and destruction on an environment-friendly basis of the world's entire arsenal of weapons of mass destruction– nuclear, chemical and bacteriological;
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of the Syrian Arab Republic, the Secretary-General of the Union for the Mediterranean and the League of Arab States.