



Plenary sitting

B8-0050/2018

16.1.2018

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on Nigeria
(2018/2513(RSP))

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on behalf of the S&D Group

**European Parliament resolution on Nigeria
(2018/2513(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Nigeria,
- Statement attributable to the Spokesman of the Secretary-General on Nigeria²¹ November 2017,
- having regard to the previous statements of the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) on the situation in Nigeria,
- having regard to the statement delivered by Muhammadu Buhari, president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria at the general debate of the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly, in New York, Tuesday, 19 September 2017
- having regard to President Muhammadu Buhari's address to the European Parliament of 3 February 2016,
- having regard to the Council conclusions on the situation in Nigeria, including those of 9 February 2015,
- having regard to the previous statements of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the situation in Nigeria,
- having regard to the previous statements of the United Nations Security Council on the situation in Nigeria,
- having regard to the second revision of the Cotonou Agreement 2007-2013, ratified by Nigeria on 27 September 2010,
- having regard to the Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion and Belief of 1981,
- having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 1981, ratified by Nigeria on 22 June 1983,
- having regard to the outcome of the Nigerian presidential elections of March 2015,
- having regard to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. whereas the UN estimates that Nigeria, Africa's most populous (population grown from 33 million in 1950 to about 192.3 million today) country and culturally diverse nation is set to become the world's third largest population, just behind China and India, by 2050, whereas this phenomenal increase of the population has put enormous pressure on land and water resources used by farmers and pastoralists, a major demographic change that is also part of the origin of conflicts;
- B. whereas since the British colonisation, the middle belt region of the country has suffered from years of economic and political tension between ethnic and religious communities, with the recent violence fuelled by competition for power and access to land between pastoralist and farming communities; whereas conflicts often have localised dynamics, but primarily involve increased southward movement of Fulani pastoralists and local farming communities particularly in the Middle Belt – notably in Plateau, Kaduna, Niger, Nassarawa, Benue, Taraba, and Adamawa States;
- C. whereas pastoralists-farmers' conflicts in Nigeria have grown, spread and intensified over the past decade and today poses a threat to national survival; whereas thousands of people have been killed, communities have been destroyed and so many farmers and pastoralists have lost their lives and property in an orgy of killings and destruction that is not only destroying livelihoods but also affecting national cohesion;
- D. whereas Pastoralism is not sustainable in Nigeria over the long term due to high population growth rate, expansion of farming and loss of pasture and cattle routes; whereas at the same time, pastoralism cannot end or be prohibited in the short term, as there are strong cultural and political economy reasons for its existence;
- E. whereas section 41(1) of the Nigerian Constitution, guarantees free movement of persons and goods; whereas there is an emerging conflict between the constitutional principle where laws emerging in some States restrict movement;
- F. whereas according to the Stephanos Foundation no fewer than 75 people were killed and 23 were injured following attacks by herdsmen of the Fulani group, in two communities of the Irigwe Kingdom, in the Bassa Local Government Area of Plateau State; whereas according to this foundation about 13,726 persons have been displaced from their communities because these herdsmen burnt 489 houses during the attacks, occurred between September and October 2017;
- G. whereas in June 2017, Fulani pastoralists were allegedly subjected to the most intense, horrific, barbaric and savage ethnic cleansing by a group of Mambila tribal militia over a period of three days leading to killing of more than 700 Fulani pastoralists and about 300 missing in Sardauna local government of Taraba state government; whereas in November 2017, the indifference by the various levels of Governments to the ethnic cleansing has emboldened another tribal militia called Bachama tribal militia to engage in ethnic cleansing of Fulani pastoralists in neighbouring Adamawa State of Nigeria, the Bachama tribal militia reportedly engaged in unprovoked massacre of more than 50 Fulani pastoral children and women when their men went out for cattle grazing;
- H. whereas the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in November 2017 that in north-eastern Nigeria 8.5 million people

were in need of life-saving assistance and 6.9 people were targeted for life-saving assistance throughout 2017;

- I. whereas on July 27, 2017 the Nigerian Senate voted to amend some key elements of the country's 1999 constitution, amidst growing complaints by some citizens that the document has become increasingly unworkable;
- J. whereas in 2016, a bill was proposed - ‘‘A Bill for an Act to establish Grazing Reserve in each of the states of the Federation to improve agriculture yield from livestock farming and curb incessant conflicts between cattle farmers and crop farmers in Nigeria’’; whereas the National Assembly on the basis that the Bill appeared to be seeking to favour one particular profession carried out by mainly one ethnic group, the Fulani, threw it out;
- K. whereas Nigeria has ratified conventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as the Cotonou Agreement;
- L. whereas more than six out of 10 Nigerians live on less than USD 2 a day; whereas this extreme poverty is even more acute in the northern states, which are the least developed in the country; whereas this poverty contributes directly to a social divide, religious hostility and regional division; whereas Nigeria’s Gini index has dramatically increased and reached 48.8 in 2010;
- M. whereas the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has announced the 2019 general elections timetable and schedule of activities, with Presidential and national assembly elections to hold in February 2019, while the governorship, state assembly and area council elections in the federal capital territory will take place on March 2, 2019;
- N. whereas, despite the peaceful transition to power of President Buhari in March 2015, peace and his government significant effort to tackle corruption and resolve conflicts in the Niger Delta and in the Middle Belt; stability in Nigeria is still been threatened by a wave of sporadic attacks, killings and kidnappings by the violent extremist group Boko Haram and some ;
- O. whereas the Nigerian National Assembly hosted a public hearing on a new NGO Bill on 13 and 14 December, that provides for the establishment of a federal agency known as the Regulatory Commission for the Supervision, Coordination and Monitoring of NGOs and Civil Society Organisations, and would impose cumbersome administrative requirements with regards to the registration and funding of association, which could potentially stifle democratic civil society in the country;
- P. whereas the European Commission announced in June 2017 a support package of €143 million for the early recovery and reconstruction needs in Borno State in Nigeria, which suffered from a worsening humanitarian crisis; whereas this support package combines short term EU humanitarian aid with long term development support to help those in the affected area, which has been devastated by the terror campaign of Boko Haram, bringing a total EU support for the crisis in Nigeria's Borno state to €224.5

million for 2017, following earlier announcements of €81.5 million in humanitarian aid;

1. Commends the significant progress made by the Buhari government the on the security challenges facing Nigeria, and in addressing corruption; further offers its support in achieving this objective and in seeking to break the link between corrupt practices and terrorism;
2. Is deeply concerned by the increasing inter-ethnic conflicts between pastoralists and farmers in the Middle Belt region which has increased security challenges already facing Nigeria, and regrets the lack of real progress in addressing these issues;
3. Urges the Government to focus on upholding human rights dignity in all policies to ensure peaceful coexistence amongst citizens irrespective of their religion, believe and political affiliations;
4. Strongly condemns the recent violent clashes between pastoralists and farmers, and calls on the Government to develop a comprehensive strategy that addresses the root causes of the violence and to protect its population and by ensuring peaceful coexistence and equal rights for all citizens,
5. Urges the Nigerian Government to negotiate a national policy framework that would protect the interests of both farmers and herders and international partners to increase investment in preventing and resolving intercommunal conflicts between cattle pastoralists and farmers by supporting cooperation through shared economic and natural resource management initiatives;
6. Considers any form used to exterminate human beings or ethnic cleansing as barbaric and a crime against humanity; calls on the UN and all international actors to investigate those who incited and perpetrated ethnic cleansing of pastoralists and barbaric killing of farmers in the mile belts of Nigeria and bring perpetrators to justice;
7. Call on the Government to ratify the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance,
8. Reminds the Government of Nigeria of its responsibility to ensure that elections are held in conformity with the international human rights obligations of Nigeria, and should take all necessary measures to ensure free, transparent and credible elections;
9. Underlines that Nigerian authorities must ensure there is an enabling environment that allows human rights defenders and civil society to do their legitimate work free of restrictions, including avoiding such legislative restrictions as the NGO Bill;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Chairman of the African Union, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary

Assembly, the Pan-African Parliament and representatives of ECOWAS.