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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 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in certain vulnerable communities in Syria
(2014/2695(RSP))

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on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in certain vulnerable communities in Syria
(2014/2695(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria in particular of 6 February 2014,
 - having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on Syria, in particular those of 14 April 2014;
 - 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), Catherine Ashton, on Syria,
 - having regard to the UNSC Resolution 2139 adopted on 22 February 2014,
 - having regard to the UN Human Rights Council resolutions on Syria, including that of 24 September 2013;
 - Having regard to the reports of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria, including its 7th report published on 12 February 2014,
 - Having regard to the statement by the UN Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide, Mr Adama Dieng of 8 July 2013,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and to the international human rights and humanitarian law instruments to which Syria is a party,
 - having regard to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,
 - having regard to Rules 122(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. Whereas the Syrian population has traditionally been composed of a rich diversity of ethnic and religious communities, respectively including Arabs, Arameans, Armenians, Assyrians, Circassians, Kurds and Turkmens, and Muslims, Christians and Druze, as well as other groups;
- B. Whereas none of the religious or ethnic communities in Syria has been spared by the three-year old conflict, which is increasingly taking on a sectarian dimension;
- C. Whereas the initially peaceful uprising against the Assad regime, which gave way to civil war in March 2011, was primarily driven by socio-economic and political grievances rather than sectarian factors;

- D. Whereas the Assad regime has deliberately triggered a dynamic of sectarian polarisation as its survival strategy; whereas this dynamic has inflamed the latent and hitherto largely repressed communal tensions, notably between the ruling minority Alawite sect and the country's Sunni Muslim majority; whereas other ethnic and religious communities have been drawn into the conflict mainly out of fear or under attack and have aligned themselves with parties to the conflict;
- E. Whereas sectarianism is being further exacerbated by the involvement of regional actors, notably from the Gulf, and of jihadi and foreign extremist groups;
- F. Whereas the Assad regime and opposition forces are held responsible for innumerable crimes of a sectarian nature, including indiscriminate killing, sexual and gender-based violence, large-scale displacement, torture and ill-treatment, enforced disappearance, and attacks on religious personnel and buildings;
- G. Whereas international humanitarian and human rights law prohibits the targeting of individuals or groups based on religious or ethnic identity as well as attacks against civilians not taking part in hostilities; whereas such actions may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity;
- H. Whereas the deepening Sunni-Shiite cleavage in Syria is affecting inter-communal relations in neighbouring countries, notably Lebanon and Iraq;
- I. Whereas the 540,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria constitute a particularly vulnerable group affected by the conflict; whereas 20,000 Palestinians in the besieged Yarmouk refugee camp outside Damascus are facing mass suffering;
1. Expresses its profound dismay at the unprecedented level of human suffering and loss of life in the Syrian conflict; denounces, once again, the continued, criminal onslaught by the Syrian regime against its own population;
 2. Strongly condemns all acts of sectarian violence committed in Syria, which are feeding a self-perpetuating cycle of violence, affecting the entire Syrian population and notably vulnerable groups, including women and children; are deepening identity fault-lines within Syrian society, and negatively affecting the tenuous prospects of a negotiated solution to the conflict;
 3. Urges all parties to the conflict to adhere strictly to international humanitarian and human rights law and calls for the protection of all vulnerable communities, including by allowing humanitarian access and lifting all sieges of populated areas, including the Old City of Homs; reiterates its call for the establishment of safe havens along the Turkish-Syrian border, and possibly within Syria, and for the creation of humanitarian corridors by the international community;
 4. Underlines the particular responsibility of the Assad regime, in stoking the increasingly sectarian dimension of this civil war; calls on all external powers, notably Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Iran, to immediately cease their support to extremist groups involved in the Syrian conflict;

5. Supports all efforts at local level to avoid and combat sectarian violence in rebel-held areas and in Kurdish-majority areas; calls on the EU and its Member States to provide further assistance to the opposition, in particular by ensuring reconstruction and the provision of administrative and other basic services in the liberated areas;
6. Expresses its grave concern at the profound consequences of the sectarian fragmentation of Syria for the stability and security of the region, notably for the neighbouring countries of Lebanon and Iraq;
7. Is without illusions as to the magnitude of the challenges at hand, yet believes that there is no alternative to finding a political and democratic solution to this conflict, which should envisage the cultural, ethnical and religious diversity of Syria, on the basis of the Geneva communiqué;
8. Remains convinced that there can be no sustainable peace in Syria without accountability for the crimes committed during the conflict, notably for those based on religious or ethnic grounds; reiterates its call for the referral of the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court and supports all initiatives in this direction; underlines also the importance of providing for a comprehensive transitional justice process, which will prove indispensable to repair the social fabric among the divided communities;
9. Strongly supports the continued work of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria; calls on all actors involved to carefully monitor human rights violations, notably those against members of minority groups, and to collect all types of testimonies in order to allow for full accountability and justice in the post-Assad Syria;
10. Recalls the pressing need to release all political detainees, as well as civil society activists, humanitarian aid workers and journalists in custody and to grant access to independent monitors to all places of detention; expresses its deepest concern about the fate of 2011 Sakharov Prize laureate Razan Zeithouneh, whose whereabouts remain unknown;
11. Calls again for particular attention to be paid to the plight of the Palestinian population affected by the conflict; calls on donors to generously support ongoing efforts by UNRWA; denounces the most extreme conditions in the Palestinian refugee camp of Yarmouk and requests immediate action from the Syrian authorities to enable humanitarian access and aid to reach this starving population;
12. Remains gravely preoccupied by the implications of the prolonged and growing presence of Syrian refugees in the neighbouring countries, in particular Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey; encourages the European Commission and EU Member States to continue providing substantial humanitarian assistance to the populations affected by the Syrian conflict; deplores the very limited number of refugees resettled in the EU and calls on Member States to show a greater degree of responsibility, notably by reinforcing their protection response;
13. 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 governments and parliaments of the EU Member States, the

Secretary-General of the UN and the UN-Arab League Special Envoy to Syria, and the government and parliament of Syria.