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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 123(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on Iraq and Syria, and the ISIS offensive, including the persecution of minorities
(2014/2843(RSP))

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on behalf of the ALDE Group

**European Parliament resolution on Iraq and Syria, and the ISIS offensive, including the persecution of minorities
(2014/2843(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Iraq and Syria, in particular those of 6 February 2014¹ on the situation in Syria and of 17 July 2014² on the situation in Iraq,
 - having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on Iraq, in particular those of 15 August 2014; having regard to the European Council conclusions on Iraq and Syria of 30 August 2014,
 - having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Iraq, of the other, and to its resolution of 17 January 2013 on the EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement³,
 - having regard to the statements by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on Iraq and Syria,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, to which Iraq and Syria are parties,
 - having regard to the EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief, adopted on 24 June 2013,
 - 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) on Iraq and Syria,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Iraq and Syria continue to face serious political, security and socio-economic challenges, and whereas the political scene in both countries is extremely fragmented and plagued by violence, to the severe detriment of the Iraqi and Syrian peoples' legitimate aspirations to peace, prosperity and a genuine transition to democracy; whereas Syria's President Assad and his government are still holding firm;
- B. whereas the jihadist al-Qaeda splinter group Islamic State (IS) – formerly the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) – has conquered parts of eastern Syria, including

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0099.

² Texts adopted, P8_TA(2014)0011.

³ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0022.

Syria's largest dam and the strategically important Tabqa airbase, and large parts of Iraq, and has subsequently perpetrated summary executions of citizens, the imposition of a harsh interpretation of Sharia law, and the destruction of Shiite, Sufi, Sunni and Christian places of worship and shrines; whereas in the last months the IS has targeted more cities and areas and has massacred, kidnapped and killed civilians, soldiers, members of local tribes, journalists, first-aid helpers, and members of sects and other religious minorities in eastern Syria and northern Iraq, in a continuing ongoing stream of excessive violence; whereas women and girls are one of the most vulnerable groups among the refugees and there are reports of the deliberate targeting of women and girls in Iraq and of kidnapping, rape and forced marriage by militants of the IS and other armed groups; whereas four million civilians are thought to be living under IS rule in Iraq and Syria, often in extremely deplorable humanitarian conditions;

- C. whereas the implosion of the Syrian state, the disintegration of the Iraqi-Syrian border and the sectarian strife has provided the IS and other radical groups such as Al-Qaida-linked Jabhat Al- Nusra with opportunities to enhance their presence in both Syria and Iraq;
- D. whereas the ongoing violent crisis in Syria has resulted in a humanitarian catastrophe on a scale unprecedented in history, with more than 191 000 people killed, most of them civilians, more than 6.4 million people internally displaced, and more than 3 million Syrian refugees, mainly in Lebanon (1.17 million refugees), Turkey (832 000), Jordan (613 000), Iraq (215 000) and Egypt and North Africa (162 000); whereas ethnic and religious minorities, as well as women and children, find themselves in a particularly vulnerable situation in this crisis; whereas almost one fifth of the world's displaced people are now Syrian refugees; whereas 145 000 Syrian refugee women who are heading a family are facing an impossible fight for survival; whereas according to UNRWA, out of approximately 540 000 Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA in Syria, over 50 % are estimated to have been displaced within Syria or in neighbouring countries; whereas the UN has described the Syrian crisis as the worst humanitarian crisis in recent history;
- E. whereas the UNHCR has stated that almost 50 % of all Syrians have lost their homes and 40 % of the refugees are forced to endure substandard living conditions; whereas according to the UN, three out of four Syrians live in poverty and unemployment is above 50 %; whereas the continuous violence has had a dramatic destabilisation effect on the neighbouring countries, notably due to the mass refugee flows; whereas these countries are facing tremendous domestic challenges of their own, with Lebanon and Jordan being particularly vulnerable; whereas the EU continues to spearhead the international response to the Syrian crisis with a budget of around EUR 2.8 billion in humanitarian, development, economic and stabilisation assistance; whereas despite all these efforts the international community is failing to meet the needs of the Syrians or those of the countries harbouring the refugees;
- F. whereas according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), there are an estimated 1.2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in central and northern Iraq and an estimated 1.5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance; whereas the upsurge of the IS has produced a humanitarian

crisis, notably a massive displacement of civilians; whereas the Commission has decided to increase humanitarian assistance to Iraq by EUR 5 million in order to provide basic assistance to displaced people, thus bringing humanitarian funding for Iraq to EUR 17 million so far in 2014; whereas the Commission's humanitarian funding for Iraq since 2013 now stands at almost EUR 59 million, including EUR 700 000 under the EU Children of Peace initiative;

- G. whereas the EU has acknowledged the burden placed on the Kurdistan region and the Kurdistan Regional Government, which are hosting a large number of IDPs;
- H. whereas many Iraqis and Syrians remain trapped in the conflict zone, due to advancing IS troops, or are having difficulties in reaching open border crossings; whereas the UNHCR fears for the lives of the Syrians trapped inside the remote al Obaidi refugee camp in Iraq after UN agencies and other groups were forced to abandon their offices, while another 3 000 Syrian refugees are residing in the nearby town of Al Qaim; whereas refugees are often forced to pay huge bribes to individuals and follow dangerous escape routes in the Jordanian desert;
- I. whereas the predominantly Christian city of Mhardeh (in Hama province) is now under siege from the Al-Qaida-linked Jabhat Al- Nusra front; whereas on 11 September 2014 the Jabhat Al-Nusra front released the 45 Fijians who were there as UN peacekeepers and had been abducted for over 2 weeks and threatened with trial under Sharia law;
- J. whereas the UNHCR has stated that it remains very difficult to operate within the area to give civilians and refugees the proper aid they need; whereas it is important to shelter the hundreds of thousands of Syrian and Iraqi refugees before winter arrives;
- K. whereas numerous fighters of foreign or EU origin with a radical Islamist agenda have fought or are fighting within the conflict zone; whereas the London-based International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation estimates that the total number of foreign fighters in Syria at present is between 11 000 and 12 000, about 3 000 of them being from the West; whereas action has to be taken to prevent these fighters from travelling to the area; whereas the EU citizens in question have been identified as a security risk by the governments of the Member States;
- L. whereas the possibility has been raised of carrying out airstrikes in eastern Syria without the prior approval of President Assad; whereas at the NATO meeting on 5 September 2014 an anti-IS coalition was formed; whereas the EEAS is currently working on a comprehensive regional strategy to address the threat posed by the IS; whereas on 10 September 2014 US President Obama unveiled his strategy to combat the IS, which includes, among other actions, a systematic campaign of air strikes against IS targets 'wherever they are', including in Syria, increased support for allied ground forces fighting the IS, and greater counter-terrorism efforts aimed at cutting off the group's funding; whereas the Arab League has pledged to strengthen cooperation to bring down the IS in Syria and Iraq;
- M. whereas the IS has secured significant income sources by looting banks and businesses on territories it controls, taking over up to six oilfields in Syria, including Syria's largest oil facility, the al-Omar field close to the border with Iraq, and is receiving funds from

wealthy donors, particularly in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates;

1. Is extremely concerned at the deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in Iraq and in Syria as a result of the occupation of parts of their territory by the IS; firmly condemns the indiscriminate killings and human rights violations perpetrated by this and other terrorist organisations, in particular against Christian and other religious and ethnic minorities such as the Yazidis, who should be part of a new, democratic Iraq and Syria, and the most vulnerable groups;
2. Strongly condemns the attacks on civilian targets, including hospitals, schools and places of worship, and the use of executions and sexual violence in the conflict; emphasises that there should be no impunity for the perpetrators of these acts; is deeply concerned at the humanitarian crisis and the massive displacement of civilians;
3. Expresses its concern at the rise in all forms of violence against the civilian population; calls on the Commission to put in place measures to prevent violence against women and children, in particular the forced marriage of girls;
4. Welcomes the announcement of the formation of a new inclusive government in Iraq, and congratulates Haider al-Abadi on his confirmation as Iraq's Prime Minister; expresses its continued support for the constitutional process, underlining the importance of a political solution to the current crisis and the urgent importance of forming an inclusive government; calls on all regional actors to contribute to efforts to promote security and stability in Iraq, and in particular to encourage the Iraqi Government to reach out to the Sunni minority and reorganise the army in an inclusive, non-sectarian and non-partisan way;
5. Recalls that the instability in Syria caused by the Assad regime's brutal war against its own people has allowed the IS to flourish; expresses its concern at the increasing involvement of extremist Islamist groups and foreign fighters in the conflict in Syria, the rise of religiously and ethnically motivated violence in the country, and the continued fragmentation and internal divisions within the opposition; considers that a lasting solution urgently requires a political transition through a Syrian-led, inclusive political process with the backing of the international community, and continues to encourage the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces to create a more united, inclusive and organised opposition front, both internally and externally;
6. Stresses the importance of all actors providing military protection to particularly vulnerable groups in Iraqi and Syrian society, such as ethnic and religious minorities, including Christians, Yazidis and Turkmens, in the current crisis, and of their participation in future lasting solutions with the aim of preserving their lives and traditions of intercultural, interethnic and interreligious coexistence in the country for a future new Iraq and Syria;
7. Rejects without reservation and considers illegitimate the announcement by the IS leadership that it has established a caliphate in the areas it now controls, and rejects the notion of any unilateral changes to internationally recognised borders by force while

also respecting the fundamental rights and freedoms of people in the IS-controlled territories;

8. Reiterates its position that the political solution should safeguard the unity, territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Iraq and Syria;
9. Is of the opinion that regional dialogue and cooperation are necessary in order to address the problems facing the region and to stop the IS and other radical groups; stresses that the EU should develop a comprehensive policy approach to the region and, notably, that Iran, Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states need to be included as essential players in any de-escalation effort in Syria and Iraq; calls on the international community, especially the EU, to facilitate such a dialogue and include all significant parties;
10. Welcomes the Government of Iraq's efforts, in association with local and regional authorities and in cooperation with the UN, to address the urgent humanitarian needs of those displaced by the current conflict and to tackle the terrorist threat facing all Iraqis, and calls for an intensification of these efforts;
11. Stresses that, in view of the unprecedented scale of the crisis, alleviating the suffering of millions of Syrians and Iraqis in need of basic goods and services must be a priority for the EU and the international community at large; once more urges the EU and its Member States to live up to their humanitarian responsibilities and increase their assistance to Syrian and Iraqi refugees, and to coordinate their efforts more effectively in this field; condemns the consistent thwarting of attempts to deliver humanitarian aid, and calls on all parties involved in the conflict, and in particular the Assad regime and the IS, to respect universal human rights, to facilitate the provision of humanitarian aid and assistance through all possible channels, including across borders and conflict lines, and to ensure the safety of all medical personnel and humanitarian workers; calls on the EU to put pressure on all donors to fulfil their promises and deliver their pledges in a swift manner; welcomes the commitments by EU Member States, since the Union is the biggest donor of financial aid and source of future pledges;
12. Recalls the statement by the Special Coordinator of the UN-OPCW, who declared that 96 % of Syrian chemical weapons have been destroyed; calls for the remaining weapons to be deactivated in accordance with the Framework for Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons;
13. Recalls that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, and that all acts of terrorism, whenever and by whomsoever committed, are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation; reaffirms that terrorism must not and should not be associated with any religion, nationality or civilisation;
14. Expresses its extreme concern regarding the increasing involvement of foreign fighters in the conflict, and recalls the Commission's communication of 15 January 2014 entitled 'Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism'¹, in which it

¹ COM(2013)0941.

calls on the Member States to increase their efforts to prevent potential fighters from going to Syria and engaging with foreign fighters after they return; stresses the importance of prevention, outreach, rehabilitation and reintegration; calls on the EU Member States to intensify cooperation and exchange of information among themselves as well as with Turkey;

15. Welcomes the decision reached by the Arab League on 7 September 2014 to take the necessary measures to confront the IS and cooperate with international, regional and national efforts to combat militants in Syria and Iraq, and to endorse UN Security Council resolution 2170; calls on the Arab League to discuss amending the Arab Convention for Fighting Terrorism of 1998 so as to enable itself to challenge global terrorism by all means, militarily, politically, intellectually and economically;
16. Welcomes the meeting of the Conference for Peace and Security in Iraq, at the initiative of France, and calls on the States parties to draw up an international strategy for fighting the terrorist actions of the IS in the region, in particular by freezing their supplies of funds and stemming the flow of recruitment of jihadists;
17. Welcomes the efforts by the US and its partners to stop the advance of the IS and facilitate access for humanitarian support; notes the European Council's conclusions of 30 August supporting the decision of individual Member States to provide military material to Iraq, including the Kurdish regional authority;
18. Is concerned that the IS is generating income through sales of oil; takes note of the EU's intention to tighten sanctions in order to prevent the IS from selling oil; therefore calls for the EU to impose sanctions on all those (governments, public or private companies) involved in the transport, transformation, refinement and commercialisation of oil extracted in IS-controlled areas, together with strict controls on financial flows in order to prevent economic activity and exploitation of tax havens on the part of the IS;
19. 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.