



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Plenary sitting

4.7.2011

B7-0390/2011

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

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

on Syria, Yemen and Bahrain in the context of the situation in the Arab world and North Africa

Fiorello Provera, Rolandas Paksas, Lorenzo Fontana, Nikolaos Salavrakos, Mara Bizzotto, Jaroslav Paška, Bastiaan Belder, Juozas Imbrasas

on behalf of the EFD Group

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United in diversity

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B7-0390/2011

European Parliament resolution on Syria, Yemen and Bahrain in the context of the situation in the Arab world and North Africa

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on crises in the Middle East, Syria, Bahrain and Yemen,
 - having regard to the U.S. President's 19 May 2011 speech regarding pro-democracy uprisings across the Arab world, in particular in Syria and Yemen,
 - having regard to the statements of the High Representative/Vice-President of the Commission on Syria of 20, 11 and 6 June 2011, and on Yemen of 3 and 30 June 2011,
 - having regard to Council's conclusion on Yemen of 20 June 2011, on Syria of 20 June and on Bahrain of 23 May 2011,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966, to which Syria, Yemen and Bahrain are parties,
 - having regard to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 1975, to which Syria and Yemen are party,
 - having regard to United Nations Secretary General's statements on human rights violations in Syria of 22 June 2011,
 - having regard to U.S. Secretary of State's statement with regard to Syria's movement of troops close to the Turkish border,
 - having regard to U.S. President Barack Obama's 19 May 2011 speech on Yemen and the commitment to a transfer of power,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966, to which Yemen and Syria are party,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the political dynamics in the Arab world and North Africa remain uncertain and the process of political transition is vulnerable to exploitation by groups bent on religious extremism and intolerance,
- B. whereas political instability in the region is a key driver of uncontrolled migratory flows into the European Union; whereas these migratory flows are particularly worrisome as they may exacerbate tensions, not only between countries of origin and countries of

destination, but also between countries of origin and transit countries,

- C. whereas more than 1 300 Syrians are believed to have been killed and a further 10 000 have been imprisoned since anti-government protests erupted in March in the southern city of Deraa in a bid to call for the ousting of President Bashar al-Assad,
- D. whereas 11 000 refugees have fled across the border to Turkey from northern Syrian towns and villages such as Jisr al-Shughour and Khirbet al-jouz after being targeted by security forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad,
- E. whereas Syrian security forces have led the way in repressing Syria's civilian population by killing protestors, arresting anti-government activists and driving civilians from their homes causing thousands to flee across the border to Turkey,
- F. whereas human rights activists report that on 24 June 2011, at least 15 people in the Syrian capital Damascus, Homs and Kiswah were killed in confrontations around the country between anti-government protesters and security forces,
- G. whereas it is widely reported that the Islamic Republic of Iran is aiding the Syrian government's crack down on protestors by supplying the al-Assad regime with equipment and other logistical support,
- H. whereas in a bid to deflect attention from the Syrian government's crack down on protestors, on June 5, civilians were sent to Syria's border with Israel on the Golan Heights to provoke the Israeli Defence Force into adopting punitive measures to resist attempts by civilian activists to breach the border,
- I. whereas on June 20 President Bashar al-Assad announced a roadmap for reform calling for a rewrite of Syria's constitution and the drafting of a new election law,
- J. whereas on June 27, 150 Syrian intellectuals and activists, including some of the country's most prominent opposition figures met in Damascus to discuss plans to bring about a peaceful transition to democracy,
- K. whereas on 23 June 2011, the European Union extended restrictive measures on Syria in relation to decision 2011/273/CFSP adopted on May 9 which imposed restrictive measures on 13 officials and associates of the Syrian regime who were identified as being responsible for the violent repression of the civilian population,
- L. whereas the Association Agreement between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Syrian Arab Republic, of the other part, has still to be signed; whereas the signing of this Agreement has been delayed at Syria's request since October 2009; whereas respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms constitutes an essential part of this Agreement,
- M. whereas Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh is currently receiving medical treatment in the Saudi capital Riyadh after sustaining serious injuries as a result of an attack on 3 June 2011 on the mosque in his palace in the capital Sana'a and since this date has not appeared in public,

- N. whereas hundreds of thousands of anti-government protesters have rallied across Yemen, demanding that President Ali Abdullah Saleh's family and members of his inner circle leave the country,
- O. whereas fifty demonstrators were killed on May 31 in the southern city of Taiz,
- P. whereas on May 21, Yemen's parliamentary coalition, the Joint Meetings Parties (JMP), signed a transition deal brokered by the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) which would entail President Saleh leaving office after thirty days and a new presidential election would be held after sixty days,
- Q. whereas on May 22, President Saleh reneged on his promise to sign the deal prompting the EU to review its policy towards Yemen and the Gulf Cooperation Council to desist in its mediation efforts,
- R. whereas the situation remains volatile in Bahrain, due to a 'state of chaos' caused by instability on behalf of the country majority's Shia population and by the involvement of the Islamic Republic of Iran into the internal affairs of the Gulf kingdom,
- S. whereas King Hamd bin Isa Al Khalifa declared his intention to launch a programme of reforms and independent investigations on the weeks of protests that have affected the country,

Syria

1. Calls for the immediate release of all Syrian political prisoners detained for their involvement in anti-government demonstrations, an end to the use of torture and abuse at the hands of Syrian security forces and the lifting of restrictions on freedom of speech and of the press;
2. Calls on the Syrian government to allow for the safe return of all refugees who fled their towns and villages as a result of a widespread crackdown on anti-government protesters, and for the cessation of operations by the Syrian security forces intended to intimidate and harass the country's civilian population;
3. Calls on third countries such as the Islamic Republic of Iran to halt supplying the Syrian regime with military, personnel and logistical support in order to repress the country's civilian population;
4. Welcomes President Bashar al-Assad initiative to engage in a "national dialogue" that should be effective, immediate, result-oriented; this process should include the drafting of a Constitution with widespread endorsement, and the completion of new laws on political parties, suspending the guarantee that the Baath party and its allies be granted two-thirds of parliamentary seats and the implementation of a concrete and tangible time table for reforms;
5. Urges the Syrian government to allow immediate access for journalists, humanitarian organizations, international observers and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to assess Syria's internal humanitarian situation, including the possibility

of a UN investigation, particularly in the worst affected areas such as Deraa, Baniyas and Homs;

6. Urges that the Syrian government refrain from all provocative measures against the State of Israel that may escalate tensions between the two countries leading to a cross-border conflict;
7. Calls on the European Union and its Member States to support the peaceful democratic aspirations of people in Syria, to review their policies towards those countries, to respect the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, and to stand ready to assist, in case of a serious commitment by national authorities, in the implementation of concrete political, economic and social reform agendas in those countries;

Yemen

8. Urges President Ali Abdullah Saleh to sign the '30-60' plan elaborated under the auspices of the Gulf Cooperation Council under which he would formally agree to step down within thirty days and elections would be held after sixty days;
9. Calls for Yemen's opposition parties to work on finding solutions to break the current impasse by forming a national unity government and an orderly transition in line with the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative, to respond to the legitimate interests of all Yemen's people and the allowance of the Yemeni government to grant unfettered access to the country for the mission of the High Commissioner for Human Rights;
10. Urges the international community, the EU, the United Nations, and the Gulf Cooperation Council to make a concerted effort to promote a peaceful transition of power and safeguard the country's vital infrastructure such as oil installations from falling into the hands of Islamist extremists allied and/or affiliates of al-Qaeda;
11. Expresses its concern for the endemic poverty within Yemen, the depletion of its water supplies, poor infrastructure, the rise in food costs and other socio-economic complaints; insists that the EU lend its support to addressing these problems as a means to diffusing the appeal of Islamist groups such as al-Qaeda;

Bahrain

12. Welcomes the initiative by King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to engage in a reform process and a national dialogue with the opposition forces; welcomes the proposed establishment of an Independent fact finding mission on the recent unrests;
13. Remains concerned by the involvement of elements linked to the Islamic Republic of Iran in the internal political affairs of Bahrain;
14. Calls on the European Union to support the national dialogue proposed by the local authorities for it to be meaningful, result-oriented and linked to a concrete timetable and benchmarks;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High

Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Government and Parliament of the Syrian Arab Republic, and the Government and Parliament of the Republic of Yemen.