



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Plenary sitting

12.6.2012

B7-0321/2012

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 Human Rights and Security Situation in the Sahel region
(2012/2680(RSP))

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on behalf of the EFD Group

**European Parliament resolution on Human Rights and Security Situation in the Sahel region
(2012/2680(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on West Africa, in particular that of 20 April 2012
 - having regard to the Council conclusions of 23 April 2012 on Mali and Sahel region,
 - having regard to the statements by the Vice-President/High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy of 17 May 2012 on the situation in Mali,
 - having regard to the statements by UN Secretary General of 17 April 2012 on the crisis in Africa's Sahel region,
 - having regard to the Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel, adopted in March 2011,
 - having regard to the Algiers Agreements of 2006 on development and peace in northern Mali,
 - having regard to the 5th Joint Consultative Meeting between the Political and Security Committee of the European Union (EUPSC) and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU-PSC) on 29 May 2012
 - having regard to Rule 122 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the human rights and security situation in the Sahel region has deteriorated in recent months due to adverse climatic conditions, instability resulting from the military intervention in Libya and the growing presence of Islamic radical movements;
- B. whereas the Sahel region faces the combined threat of drought, high food prices, displacement and more than 16 million people directly at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition;
- C. whereas NATO's intervention in Libya has caused an overspill of weapons, armed groups and widespread instability in the Sahel region;
- D. whereas unemployed youths from the Sahel are susceptible for recruitment by extremist groups such as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
- E. whereas a military coup on March 21 in Mali to depose President Amadou Touré has resulted in widespread instability after Tuareg rebels, under the National Movement in northern Mali declared their own state, Azawad, which has been infiltrated by the Islamist group Ansar Dine that is linked to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM);
- F. whereas in the towns of Gao, Timbuktu and Kindal, Ansar Dine has sought to impose Islamic sharia law and dozens of northern Malians have been subjected to arbitrary

detention, extra-judicial executions and other forms of aggression;

G. whereas since January 2012, at least 284,000 residents have fled Northern Mali as a result of armed conflict, and have fled to countries such as Niger, Burkina Faso, Algeria and Mauritania;

H. whereas Niger's President Mahamadou Issoufou warned the international community on "afghanisation" of the Sahel, due to influx of foreign fighters in training camps located in regions outside the control of legitimate governments;

I. whereas a number of western tourists were subject to kidnappings in Mauritania and salafis and jihadist groups are on the rise, leading to a islamisation of the society and growing cases of discrimination against minorities;

J. whereas on April 28, 2012, Biram Dah Abeid, who is the president of the Mauritanian anti-slavery movement Initiative de Résurgence du Mouvement Abolitionniste de Mauritanie (IRA) was arrested in Nouakchott, along with some other members, after he burned several pages of a Malikite theological book, that asserts that slavery is a practice encompassed by the Islamic faith;

I. whereas the EU faces the challenge of migratory flows caused by instability in the Sahel region;

1. Is particularly concerned by the human rights and security situation in the countries of the Sahel and stresses the importance of reinforcing effective and good governance in those countries in order to prevent the infiltration and presence of Islamic radical movements;
2. Strongly condemns the ousting of Mali's democratically elected President and the imposition of Sharia law in Northern Mali under the control of Ansar Dine; underlines the fact that the territorial integrity of Mali is a key interest of the European Union;
3. Urges the HR/VP to raise the subject of the arrest of Mr. Biram Dah Abeid with the Mauritanian authorities; calls on Mauritanian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Mr. Biram Dah Abeid; grant him without delay visitation rights and allow him access to adequate legal support; calls on the Government of Mauritania to ensure the application and implementation of the Mauritanian rule of law, specifically the anti-slavery laws of 1905, 1961, 1981 and 2007, the law of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders of 1998 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
3. Is extremely concerned by the exceptional drought that has affected the countries of the Sahel and urges the Commission to coordinate relief efforts with other international donors in order to ensure a targeted and efficient allocation of resources for those in need;
4. Invites the HR/VP to elaborate in coordination with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States a comprehensive approach towards the Sahel based on targeted development and human rights strategies to prevent migratory flows resulting from instability, to tackle security problems and enhance the effectiveness of EU efforts for democracy promotion;

3. Expresses its support for the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership and the military collaboration between Niger, Algeria, Mali and Mauritania to prevent the infiltration of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb;

7. 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 institutions of ECOWAS and the African Union, the Interim President of Mali, the Governments of Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Libia, Mauritania, Niger.