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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 Human Rights and security situation in the Sahel region
(2012/2680(RSP))

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on behalf of the ALDE Group

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

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel, adopted in March 2011,
 - having regard to the UN Security Council statements on Mali of 22 March¹, 26 March², 4 April³ and 9 April⁴ 2012,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions of 22 and 23 March 2012 on the Sahel region,
 - having regard to the call by the various UN agencies – UNICEF, UNHCR and the WHO – of 10 April 2012 for additional funding for the millions of people affected by food insecurity in the Sahel region,
 - having regard to UNICEF's appeal for USD 26 million for Mali to enable it to meet the health and nutritional needs of children until the end of the year,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on West Africa, in particular its resolution on Mali of 20 April 2012,
 - having regard to Zimmer report on EU policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security challenges of 27 September 2011,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the size of the Sahel region, from Dakar to N'Djamena, is extremely important,
- B. whereas the Sahel region is plagued by persisting problems related to poverty and weak governance capacity, the latter are as diverse as war in Libya and climate change swings;
- C. whereas the EU's strategy identifies Mauritania, Mali and Niger as core Sahel countries and argues that lack of governmental capacity and systemic poverty are mutually reinforcing dynamics;

¹ SC/10590.

² SC/10592.

³ SC/10600.

⁴ SC/10603.

- D. whereas the terrorist threat facing the African continent is a complex problem, whereas drug trafficking and human trafficking, piracy, arms trade and money laundering are forms of transnational organised crime that indicate a link between drug traffickers in West Africa and in groups such as AQIM [al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb];
 - E. whereas Khadafy overturn has led to the circulation of weapons in all the Sahara;
 - F. whereas the increase of rebel groups such as Boko Haram in Chad and in Nigeria is a threat for the stability of all Sahel region;
 - G. whereas the threat is not only military, Islamist and terrorist, while according to UN, the number of people facing food insecurity rose between late 2011 and mid-2012 from 13 to over 18 million, including 8 million facing a severe food crisis;
 - H. whereas the recurrence of crises (1973, 2005, 2010 and now the yearly food crisis), request to address the reasons for this endemic malnutrition and fatal sequence: malnutrition - faintness - disease;
 - I. whereas cultural taboos prevailing in the Sahel region and the status of women in these societies;
 - J. whereas in Niger 400,000 children are at risk and nearly one of two under the age of 5 haven't got enough food which could lead to physical and cognitive sequelae;
 - K. whereas political turmoil in northern Mali had aggravated the situation, displacing nearly 300,000 people, including more than 160,000 who had migrated toward Burkina Faso, Niger and Mauritania, all of them affected by food insecurity.
 - L. 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;
 - M. whereas according to the FAO, a swarm of locusts is forming on the southern Libya-Algeria border and constitute a new threat for the already shambled region of Sahel, whereas those countries are unable to implement full locust monitoring and response activities across the region, due to political instability.
1. Urges the Vice-President/High Representative to speed up the implementation of the various components of the EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel; supports the commitment of Council to contribute to the development of a peaceful, stable region where food self-sufficiency is secured;
 2. Expresses deep concerns about the deterioration of the security situation in the Sahel region, calls for EU support to Sahel countries, in partnership with regional organisations and other international partners, to fight against the interlinked

challenges of poverty, terrorism, violent extremism and organised crime and to address spill-over effects of the recent crisis in Libya and the recent developments in Mali;

3. Welcomes regional initiatives such as the ones organised by ACSRT on capacity to respond to terrorism with a national legal system, and also by developing a regional convention or treaty on extradition and mutual legal assistance, and a regional arrest warrant;
4. Recalls and condemns the abduction on 24-25 November 2011 of two French nationals, a Swede, a Dutchman and a South African holding a British passport, along with the killing of a German citizen who resisted the kidnappers; notes that this brings the number of EU hostages in the Sahel area to 12, with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb still holding two Spanish nationals and an Italian national abducted in western Algeria in October 2011 and four French nationals abducted in Niger in September 2010; and, on 15 April, a Swiss Christian missionary abducted in Tombouctou;
5. Urges the HR/VP to raise the subject of the arrest of Mr. Biram Dah Abeid and IRA members with the Mauritanian authorities and asks for its release; calls for access individual access to adequate legal support and visitation rights; 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;
6. Expresses its deepest concerns about the influx of several thousand refugees, fleeing Mali, in a region already extremely fragile, calls for the opening of a humanitarian corridor in order to help the people whose safety and access to humanitarian assistance should be ensured, many of whom have sought refuge in neighbouring countries such as Niger, Mauritania and Burkina Faso;
7. Calls for a comprehensive and rapid response to the Sahel humanitarian crisis as a whole;
8. Recalls that priority should be given to irrigation and improved mobility of resources; believes that food self-sufficiency requires infrastructure improvements, clarification of land tenure and increased fight against speculation more actively;
9. Underlines that prices remain at high levels and do not allow vulnerable populations to access food, recalls that the main grain flows are hindered by road blocks that have multiplied following the strengthening of border controls. Also, the social and political unrest in the Sahel, especially in Mali, and its consequences continue to disrupt the functioning of markets;
10. Recalls also, the pastoral conditions remain very precarious in many areas because of the scarcity of the grass cover and the low filling of water points.

11. Welcomes the increased engagement of the African Union (AU) and the United Nations in support of regionally-owned processes and stresses the need to continue close consultation with regional organisations including the AU and ECOWAS;
12. Welcomes the decisions taken by Ministers in charge of agriculture, regional integration and trade in West Africa who have launched an urgent appeal to the international community to help mobilised financial resources in support of regional initiatives to mitigate the worsening food and nutritional crises in the Sahel region during their meeting on regional food crises in Lome on 5 June 2012.
13. Calls on the EU and its Member States to pay particular attention to the situation of women and girls in the Sahel region and to take all the necessary measures to ensure their protection from every type of violence and from violations of their human rights; calls also for a better access to education and to family planning;
14. 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 and the UN Security Council.