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Plenary sitting

20.11.2012

B7-0512/2012

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 the situation in Burma, particularly the continuing violence in Rakhine State (2012/2878(RSP))

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on behalf of the ECR Group

B7-0512/2012

European Parliament resolution on the situation in Burma, particularly the continuing violence in Rakhine State (2012/2878(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Burma, in particular the one of 20 April 2012 and 13 September 2012,
- having regard to the Progress Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burma of 7 March 2012,
- having regard to the Council Conclusions on Burma of 23 April 2012,
- having regard to the Council decision 2012/225/CFSP of 26 April 2012,
- having regard to the exchange of views on the Rohingya issue in the European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights on 11 July 2012,
- having regard to the Statement by the spokesperson of the High Representative Catherine Ashton of 26 October 2012 on the renewed violence in Rakhine State in Myanmar (Burma);
- having regard to the Joint Declaration signed on 3 November 2012 by the European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and the Minister of the Office of the President of Myanmar, Mr U Aung Min at the Myanmar peace centre in Yangon,
- having regard to the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto,
- having regard to Articles 18 - 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948,
- having regard to Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966,
- having regard to the decision that Myanmar will host the South East Asia Games in 2013 and will take over the chairmanship of ASEAN in 2014
- having regard to Rule 122 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas since early 2011, Burmese government has taken numerous steps to expand civil liberties in the country which has seen a remarkable departure from authoritarian rule; the majority of political prisoners have been released and a number have been elected to Parliament in the by-elections, preliminary ceasefires have come into force and the

government has committed itself to reforms and significant steps have been undertaken to establish a more open society;

B. Whereas on 28 May the rape and murder of a Buddhist woman set off a chain of deadly clashes between the majority Rakhine Buddhist population and the minority Rohingya Muslim in Rakhine State;

C. Whereas in the following days communal violence spread between the two communities, disproportionately involving Rakhine mobs and security forces targeting Rohingyas, where 10 Muslim men were killed by the mob in retaliation of the rape although they were unconnected with the incident; the clashes left dozens of people dead, thousands of homes destroyed and at least 70,000 people internally displaced;

D. Whereas since the events of May and June 2012 tensions have remained high in the Rakhine State and violence flared up once again in October although this time it is unclear what sparked the unrest as Rakhine Buddhists and Muslims blame each other; again dozens of people have been killed, at least another 35 thousands displaced and many religious buildings destroyed and homes torched;

E. Whereas a state of emergency, which allows the introduction of martial law, has been in place in Burma's western Rakhine State since the communal clashes in June, and late October the government declared a curfew in the affected areas and deployed additional security personnel, none of which has stopped the violence;

F. Whereas Rakhine is the second poorest state in Burma, already one of the least-developed countries in the world and poverty and repression have played a role in fuelling the communal violence, as have bitter historical memories of both communities;

G. Whereas discrimination against the Rohingya minority still persists and the international community has urged the Burmese government to review 1982 Citizenship Law to ensure that Rohingyas are no longer stateless and the roots of longstanding discrimination against the Rohingya population can be tackled;

H. Whereas along with the physical separation of the two communities a profound mental separation can as well be observed making the way to peaceful reconciliation harder than ever to achieve;

I. Whereas, in the face of persistent violence, an estimated 1 million Rohingyas have fled to neighbouring countries over the years, 300 000 to Bangladesh alone, where their long-term situation remains unresolved;

J. Whereas at the end of October another 120 people were missing after their boat capsized in the Bay of Bengal; people onboard were Rohingya Muslims who had fled violent clashes in Burma;

I. Whereas the European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso has offered Burma 78 million euros in EU development aid during visit to Nay Pyi Taw and underlined the EU

stands ready to mobilise 4 million euros for immediate humanitarian aid provided access to the affected areas is guaranteed;

1. Welcomes the continuing political and civil rights reforms that are taking place in Burma and encourages the authorities to intensify their efforts, including release of remaining political prisoners, in order to bring about a full transformation to democracy.
2. Is alarmed therefore about the resurgence of ethnic violence in Rakhine that has caused many deaths, injuries, destruction of property and displacement of local populations and expresses its concern that the inter-communal clashes may put at risk the country's transition.
3. Urges rapid assistance by the Burmese authorities to those suffering and displaced by the violence including more vigorous action on the issues of citizenship, work permits and freedom of movement for the Rohingya minority.
4. Calls on the government of Burma to provide the UN agencies and humanitarian NGOs, as well as journalists and diplomats, unhindered access to all areas of the country including Rakhine State, and give unrestricted access to humanitarian aid for all affected populations.
5. Calls on the EU and member states to provide humanitarian assistance and support the Burmese government in its efforts to stabilise the situation and more rapidly implement reform programmes in ways which embed the rule of law, respect for human rights and political freedom.
6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Government and Parliament of Burma, the EU High Representative, the Commission, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the Secretary General of ASEAN, the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, the UN Special Representative for Human Rights in Myanmar, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the UN Human Rights Council.