



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Plenary sitting

12.3.2013

B7-0150/2013

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 Iraq: the plight of minority groups, in particular the Iraqi Turkmen
(2013/2562(RSP))

Charles Tannock, Struan Stevenson, Ryszard Antoni Legutko, Geoffrey Van Orden, Tomasz Piotr Poręba, Ryszard Czarnecki, Adam Bielan
on behalf of the ECR Group

**European Parliament resolution on Iraq: the plight of minority groups, in particular the Iraqi Turkmen
(2013/2562(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Iraq, of the other part (COM(2010)0638),
 - having regard to the International Covenant for Iraq adopted in Sharm el-Sheikh (Egypt) on 3 May 2007,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Iraq, including its resolution of 20 January 2011 on the situation of Christians in the context of freedom of religion,
 - having regard to United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions 1956 (2010), 1957 (2010) and 1958 (2010) of 15 December 2010,
 - having regard to the Commission's Joint Strategy Paper for Iraq (2011-2013),
 - having regard to the recent report published by Amnesty International on the human rights situation in Iraq;
 - having regard to Rule 110 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Iraq has long been home to a variety of ethnic and religious minority groups, including Christians, Turkmen, Kurds, Shabak, Mandaean, Armenians, Yezidi, Baha'is, Black Iraqis, Assyrians, Jews, Palestinians and others, as well as a significant, non-sectarian secular middle class,
- B. whereas in the last years the respective populations of minority groups in Iraq have drastically diminished, as many have fled the country, while others have been forced to relocate elsewhere in Iraq,
- C. whereas Turkmen are the third largest ethnic group in Iraq; whereas there has been an ongoing dispute between the Turkmen and Kurds over Kirkuk, a region rich in oil and other natural resources, with tensions rising after the toppling of Saddam Hussein,
- D. whereas the Turkmen have been subject in the past to many attacks and abductions by both Kurdish forces and Arab extremist groups; and whereas both Sunni and Shi'a Turkmen have also been targeted on sectarian grounds,
- E. whereas in 2012 at least 46 Turkmen lost their lives in direct attacks; and whereas in the beginning of 2013 there were additional killings, abductions and car bomb assaults in Kirkuk and the surrounding area, killing at least 12 people and wounding more than 60,
- F. whereas 1.5 million Christian Iraqi citizens (Chaldeans, Syriacs and members of other Christian minorities) were living in Iraq in 1990, though their numbers have fallen to less than 400,000 today; whereas they constitute an ancient, native population group

which is now facing serious danger of persecution and exile; and whereas hundreds of thousands of Christians have fled the violence of which they continue to be the target, either leaving their country completely or being displaced within its borders,

- G. whereas in the last twelve years over 65 churches have been bombed and many destroyed, while hundreds of Christians have been kidnapped or killed, including children,
 - H. whereas minorities continue to face numerous social and economic barriers, including lack of proper access to employment, health care, education, housing, or the safe practice of culture and religion, as well as lack of official documents which have still not been expedited by authorities for some of the minority groups,
 - I. whereas women from minority groups experience high levels of gender-based violence, including sexual violence and intimidation, with domestic violence being a major problem,
 - J. whereas Article 125 of the Iraqi Constitution guarantees the protection of minorities; and whereas further domestic Iraqi legislation recognises these protections,
 - K. whereas the crisis in Syria has created new substantial flows of refugees and returnees towards Iraq, who are now faced with strong personal and economic uncertainty and a condition of high vulnerability in Iraq,
 - L. whereas according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to date 1,500, 000 Iraqis have been displaced within the country, 500,000 of whom are homeless, and 230,000 have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, chiefly Syria and Jordan; whereas in Syria they face danger from Salafist extremist groups;
 - M. whereas according to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees more than 56,000 Syrian refugees have sought refuge in Iraqi Kurdistan since the start of the Syrian conflict,
 - N. N whereas according to a recent report by the UN working group on arbitrary detention, conditions for the Iranian refugees who have been moved from Camp Ashraf to Camp “Liberty” (Hurriya) “are synonymous with those in a detention centre”, and despite assurances by the Iraqi authorities and the UN Special Representative in Iraq that their safety would be guaranteed they were subjected to a vicious rocket attack on 9th February 2013 that left 7 dead, 10 dismembered and over 90 seriously injured;
 - O. whereas, despite a significant improvement in the security situation, the level of violence faced by the Iraqi population remains unacceptably high, with bombings and shootings reported daily; and whereas continuing tension and violence leaves most Iraqis uncertain about their future and makes it impossible to promote the economic and social integration of the Iraqi population at large,
-
- 1. Strongly condemns attacks against the Turkmen minority and calls on both the Iraqi authorities and the Kurdistan Regional Government to stop any acts of violence and to bring those responsible to justice;
 - 2. Calls for the full implementation, without delay, of the Erbil agreement and establishment of a national unity government which properly represents the political, religious and ethnic diversity of Iraqi society; Is of the opinion that this is the *sine qua*

non requirement for improving situation of the minorities in the country;

3. Expresses concern at the growing sectarian tensions and deep lack of trust between the Iraqi Government and the Opposition, which, if not remedied, can lead to a resumption of a violent conflict; Expresses great concern at the potential negative spill-over from the Syrian conflict into Iraq, which could exacerbate sectarian tensions in Iraq; Calls on all players in Iraq to behave responsibly and with restraint to avoid such a scenario;
4. Expresses deep concern over the prison-like conditions for the Iranian refugees who have been moved from Camp Ashraf to Camp “Liberty” (Hurriya); Calls on Iraq to ensure freedom of movement for the residents as required by UN High Commissioner for Refugees; Asks EU Member States to do everything possible to facilitate the resettlement of the residents of Camp Hurriya, so that the issue of their presence on Iraqi territory can be finally settled;
5. Remains deeply concerned at the continuing acts of violence perpetrated against the civilian population, vulnerable groups and all religious communities, including Christian and Turkmen minorities, which instil in the population a deep sense of fear and uncertainty about their future and the future of Iraq;
6. Calls on the Iraqi authorities to increase their efforts to protect Christian minorities and all vulnerable minorities to guarantee every Iraqi citizen the right to practise their faith or affirm their identity in freedom and safety, to take more determined measures to combat inter-ethnic and inter-religious violence, to protect the secular population and to do everything in their power to bring the perpetrators to justice;
7. Notes that the number of refugees seeking safety in Iraq when fleeing neighbouring Syria continues to rise; Calls for assistance to the Iraqi authorities in managing the refugee flow into Iraq, namely by ensuring that those refugees are accepted into the territory on humanitarian grounds and that they are directed to refugee camps;
8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the President of the European Council, the President of the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the presidents of the parliaments of the Member States, the Government and the Council of Representatives of the Republic of Iraq.