



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Plenary sitting

20.5.2013

B7-0222/2013

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

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

on the situation of Syrian refugees in the neighbouring countries
(2013/2611(RSP))

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on behalf of the S&D Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation of Syrian refugees in the neighbouring countries
(2013/2611(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria, in particular those of 16 February 2012¹ on the situation in Syria and of 13 September 2012²,
- having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council's conclusions on Syria of 23 March, 23 April, 14 May, 25 June, 23 July, 15 October, 19 November and 10 December 2012, and of 23 January, 18 February, 11 March and 22 April 2013; having regard to the European Council's conclusions on Syria of 2 March, 29 June, and 14 December 2012, and of 8 February 2013,
- having regard to the numerous statements by High Representative / Vice-President Catherine Ashton on the situation in Syria, in particular those of 22 October 2012 and 13 March 2013 concerning refugees,
- having regard to the statements by Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva on the situation in Syria of 17 July, 31 July and 29 August 2012, and to that of 23 April 2013 entitled 'Syria: the time is running out',
- having regard to UN Security Council resolutions 2059 of 20 July, 2043 of 21 April and 2042 of 14 April 2012, and to the updated report of the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry of 11 March 2013,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 1984, the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict of 2000, to all of which Syria is a party,
- having regard to the first High-Level International Pledging Conference for Syria, held in Kuwait on 30 January 2013,
- having regard to the Marrakesh meeting of the Group of Friends of the Syrian People and to the international conference held in Paris on 28 January 2013,
- having regard to the 'National Pact' and the 'Common Political Vision for the Transition in Syria' issued following the Syrian opposition conference held under the auspices of the League of Arab States in Cairo on 2 and 3 July 2012,

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0057.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0351.

- having regard to the conclusions and recommendations of ‘The Day-After Project: Supporting a Democratic Transition in Syria’, published in August 2012,
 - having regard to the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP) of 19 December 2012,
 - having regard to the Syrian Government’s Response Plan of 19 December 2012,
 - having regard to the Syrian Humanitarian Forum (SHF), which was set up in spring 2012, and to its most recent meeting on 19 February 2013,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas as of 6 May 2013 the UNHCR had registered nearly 1 440 228 Syrian refugees; whereas 455 665 of them have gone to Lebanon, 448 370 to Jordan, 322 407 to Turkey and 141 702 to Iraq; whereas the UN estimates that the total number of refugees could reach 3.5 million by the end of 2013; whereas 4.25 million Syrians are displaced within their own country and are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, and 1.5 million are at risk of food insecurity;
 - B. whereas the number of Syrian refugees is rising dramatically as the political and humanitarian situation deteriorates each day that the civil war continues; whereas the civil war in Syria is a major threat to the fragile security and stability of the region as a whole; whereas spill-over effects from the war are in danger of transitioning from incidental to structural;
 - C. whereas not only civilians, but also several former political and military leaders of the regime, as well as ambassadors, have defected to neighbouring countries and beyond; whereas senior figures such as Bishop Boulos Yazigi and Bishop Yohanna Ibrahim have been kidnapped and become targets in the Syrian conflict; whereas sectarian violence such as that in Bayda is likely to escalate the war;
 - D. whereas the host countries have maintained an open-door policy throughout the war, but have opted for different hosting methods; whereas their ability and capacity to absorb and shelter the increasing stream of refugees is being stretched to the limit as ‘incidents’ begin to happen regularly along the border lines; whereas Lebanon has gone for a ‘no camp’ policy and has largely absorbed the refugees into local communities; whereas in general the people of the region have opened their homes to refugees from Syria in a positive and fruitful way;
 - E. whereas up to 22 April 2013 the EU’s committed assistance amounted to almost EUR 473 million, including EUR 200 million from its humanitarian budget and EUR 273 million from the Member States;
 - F. whereas various reports from non-governmental aid organisations state that only 30 to 40 per cent of the total money pledged by the international community has actually been provided;
 - G. whereas some 400 000 Palestinian refugees have been affected inside Syria; whereas the

Palestinians have largely remained neutral in the conflict; whereas almost 50 000 Palestinians are registered by UNWRA in Lebanon and almost 5 000 in Jordan; whereas Jordan has closed its border to the Palestinians fleeing the conflict in Syria, and whereas they are to a great extent prevented from working in Lebanon; whereas the Palestinian refugees – a vulnerable and disproportionately poor community even before the war – are entirely reliant on UNWRA as the sole provider not only of education, health and relief services, but also of food, cash distribution and medical aid;

- H. whereas safety and security have degenerated in the Jordanian Zaatari Camp, with thefts and fires, such as that of 21 April 2013, becoming commonplace; whereas the Zaatari camp is housing over 130 000 people, making it the fourth-largest city in Jordan; whereas insecurity continues to endanger lives in the camps, also affecting humanitarian and aid workers and journalists;
- I. whereas, according to international organisations, women and girls in the refugee camps are the victims of increasing sexual violence, with rape being used as a weapon of war; whereas there are no viable medical options for Syrian refugees who are survivors of sexual violence; whereas, according to several sources, temporary Muthah ‘marriages of pleasure’ are taking place in Syrian refugee camps;
- J. whereas a Syrian-led inclusive political transition that meets the legitimate democratic aspirations of the Syrian people is the only way towards a free and democratic Syria; whereas further uncontrolled militarisation of the conflict can only bring greater suffering to the Syrian people and the region as a whole; whereas the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria has observed that more brutal tactics and new military capabilities had been deployed in recent months by both sides; whereas arms continue to flow into Syria through various channels;
- K. whereas thousands of those of who have fled in Syria have deserted from the armed forces to escape having to commit war crimes or crimes against humanity, or are evading military service for similar reasons;
- L. whereas President Bashar al-Assad and his authoritarian regime have no place in the future of Syria; whereas the only way to avoid a further escalation of the war and to help resolve the situation of the refugees via a peaceful and democratic transition in the country is for the President to step down;
- M. whereas an alternative to the current regime should be inclusive and representative of the diversity of Syrian society and should fully respect universal values of democracy, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, with special regard to the rights of ethnic, cultural and religious minorities and of women; whereas the establishment of an inclusive, representative provisional government by opposition forces may contribute to this alternative;
- N. whereas a Group of Friends of Syria has been established and has held several conferences at foreign-minister level, with the participation of representatives of key international organisations including the UN, the League of Arab States, the EU, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Arab Maghreb Union and the African Union;

- O. whereas Syrian opposition representatives have held several meetings over the past months with the aim of overcoming internal divergences and creating a united front, and have issued a ‘National Pact’ and a ‘Common Political Vision for the Transition in Syria’, as well as the conclusions and recommendations of ‘The Day-After Project: Supporting a Democratic Transition in Syria’; whereas, despite all efforts, internal divisions and tensions persist within this opposition;
- P. whereas, as a result of the veto by Russia and China, the UN Security Council has so far been unable to give an adequate response to the civil war in Syria; whereas, in its resolution adopted on 3 August 2012, the UN General Assembly deplored the failure of the Security Council to agree on measures to ensure the compliance of the Syrian authorities with its decisions; whereas, on the basis of UN Security Council resolutions, UN unarmed military observers have been deployed in Syria;
- Q. whereas the EU has imposed targeted sanctions on Syria in several rounds, including a travel ban, an asset freeze and a ban on exports of luxury goods and of dual-use goods to the country, and has further strengthened its arms embargo against Syria;
1. Condemns once again, in the strongest terms, the brutal massacre of the Syrian population by the regime; applauds the courage of the Syrian people; expresses its solidarity with, and support for, Syrians struggling for democracy, dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms; reiterates its call for President Bashar al-Assad and his regime to step aside immediately, so as to allow a peaceful, inclusive and democratic Syrian-led transition to take place in the country;
 2. Calls on all armed actors to put an immediate end to violence in Syria; stresses again that international humanitarian law, the main aim of which is to protect civilians, must be fully respected by all actors in the crisis; stresses that those responsible for the widespread, systemic and gross human rights violations committed in Syria over the past 24 months must be held accountable; in this context, strongly supports the calls made by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court;
 3. Believes that the key to solving the conflict lies in political mechanisms to facilitate the Syrian-led political process that will promote a credible and effective political solution among those genuinely committed to the transition; reaffirms the priority need to keep the humanitarian and political tracks separate in order to facilitate access to those in need; calls on the EU and the EEAS to develop a roadmap for political governance in the liberated areas, including the possibility of lifting the sanctions;
 4. Notes that all deserters from Syria are entitled to further protection, being at risk on other grounds than those set out in paragraph 26 of the UNHCR guidelines, namely ‘excessive or disproportionately severe’ punishment, possibly amounting to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or even arbitrary execution;
 5. Calls on donors, in the light of the growing needs of the Palestine refugee population in Syria and in neighbouring countries, to generously support UNRWA’s ongoing efforts to shore up their resilience and minimise their suffering and displacement;

6. Reiterates its call on UN Security Council members, in particular Russia and China, but also the United States, to honour their responsibility to put an end to the violence and repression against the Syrian people; continues to support the efforts of the EU and its Member States in this field;
7. Calls for immediate humanitarian assistance for all in need in Syria, with special regard to the wounded, refugees, the internally displaced, women and children; commends the efforts of the International Red Cross and UNRWA in this regard; demands of the Syrian government that it allow humanitarian organisations full access to the country; stresses the need to increase cooperation among the various actors operating on the ground, such as local authorities, international organisations and NGOs, including cooperation at the border; considers that assistance protocols and monitoring at the border would bring added value;
8. Pays tribute to host communities and to Syria's neighbouring countries, in particular Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq, for their remarkable resourcefulness in providing shelters and humanitarian aid for families fleeing the war in Syria, but is gravely concerned at the dangerous saturation point that those countries are approaching;
9. Calls on the EU to take a leading role in providing assistance to the Syrian refugees, and calls on the EU and its Member States to generate as a matter of urgency a comprehensive programme to expand and enhance its support to all neighbouring countries hosting refugees with financial and in-kind assistance, in order to facilitate a safe and appropriate shelter for refugees despite all obstacles and difficulties;
10. Notes the need for tents, sanitary facilities, medicines, education and, particularly, for reinforcement of communities, stability, services and infrastructure, as well as programmes to build capacity to handle the growing flow of refugees; points to the importance of assessing the conditions of refugees living outside the camps; stresses the need to consider relocating refugees to other areas;
11. Calls for the EU's material and political support to be increased, in order to alleviate the risk that the increasing number of Syrian refugees poses to the socio-economic and political stability of the neighbouring countries, especially Lebanon;
12. Calls on the EU and the international community to set up accountability mechanisms to ensure that all funds pledged reach those for whom they were really intended; welcomes the significant European pledges made at the Kuwait donor conference on 30 January 2013; calls on the UN and the international community, in particular the Gulf countries, to step up their assistance in the light of the growing needs; calls on the EU Member States to accept more refugees;
13. Underlines the importance of keeping international borders open, and urges the international community to support Lebanon and Jordan generously in managing the growing refugee influx; urges the Government of Jordan to uphold the principles of non-refoulement and equal treatment of refugees;
14. Remains deeply concerned about the widespread and systematic violation of human rights; calls on the EU and the international community to enhance the protection of

civilians, including humanitarian workers and medical personnel; urges the international community to find a solution to the ongoing insecurity and law-and-order problems in the refugee camps by setting up a new security initiative within the camps; urges all parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian law and to facilitate humanitarian access to allow aid workers inside and outside the country to cope with growing needs; supports the High Representative's condemnation of terrorist attacks of any kind;

15. Denounces the practice of sexual violence in Syria's civil war; urges the EU and the international community to allocate resources specifically to target sexual violence; calls on the host communities to provide proper medical treatment for victims of sexual violence;
16. Encourages the Joint Special Representative for Syria of the UN and the League of Arab States to take an ambitious and proactive approach; calls on the international community, including the EU and its Member States, to provide him with strong and unified support;
17. 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 parliaments and governments of the Member States, and all the parties involved in the conflict in Syria.