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B7-0157/2014

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 in Syria
(2014/2531(RSP))

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B7-0157/2014

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Syria
(2014/2531(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Charter of the United Nations,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
 - having regard to the Action Group for Syria Final Communiqué agreed in Geneva on 30 June 2012,
 - having regard to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC),
 - having regard to the OPCW Executive Council Decision of 27 September 2013 (EC-M-33/DEC.1) on the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons,
 - having regard to international humanitarian law,
 - having regard to the Geneva Conventions on refugees,
 - having regard to UNRWA’s bi-weekly Syria Crisis Response Update of 7-20 January 2014 on the situation of the Palestinian refugees in Syria,
 - having regard to the UNHCR and the Inter-agency Refugee Response for Syria appeals,
 - having regard to the EU Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions of 20 January 2014,
 - having regard to the EU Foreign Affairs Council statement of 6 September 2013,
 - having regard to the EU Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions of 28 May 2013,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, 18 months after the agreement of the Final Communiqué of the Action Group for Syria (known as Geneva I) on 30 June 2012, Geneva II was convened on 22 January 2014 in Montreux, Switzerland, to try to bring a political solution to the conflict in Syria;
- B. whereas delegations representing the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Syrian National Coalition (National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces – SOC) met for eight days; whereas other opposition and rebel groups refused to participate in the talks; whereas representatives of over 40 countries accompanied the talks; whereas all regional players are important in order to achieve a solution; whereas Iran was invited by the UN Secretary-General, but then wrongly disinvited following US objections;

- C. whereas, according to the statements by both the UN/Arab League mediator Lakhdar Brahimi and representatives of the two sides, the first round was concluded with little tangible progress, although both accept the Geneva I Communiqué as the basis for the talks and give different interpretations as to the priority of events; whereas attempts to reach limited agreements on (a) humanitarian aid, access and safe exit to desperate and starving besieged populations, mainly women, children, the elderly and the sick, in Homs and the Yarmouk and Sbeineh Palestinian refugee camps, and (b) the release or exchange of prisoners, were not concluded;
- D. whereas, according to the UN/Arab League mediator, progress was very slow, but represented a modest beginning which they can build on; whereas the two sides agreed on the need to continue the talks and have been invited back to Geneva for a second round of talks on 10 February, with the opposition Syrian National Coalition (SNC) confirming participation and the government negotiating team needing to consult Damascus before making a final commitment;
- E. whereas there is no single political opposition group; whereas ‘opposition or rebel groups’, including groups like the ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) or the Jabhat al-Nusra groups, constitute a complex mixture of armed groups, including jihadist factions, with various allegiances fighting a proxy war in Syria in which in-fighting is estimated to have led to 1 400 deaths; whereas over 10 000 foreigners are estimated to be fighting with these armed groups; whereas the fact that scores of them are EU citizens has alarmed Western governments about possible dire repercussions; whereas the danger of the conflict spilling over into the whole region is terrifying;
- F. whereas, according to various reports, nearly 1 900 people died in Syria as talks were being held in Switzerland, increasing further the dramatic death toll of more than 130 000 from the nearly three-year-old conflict that started in March 2011; whereas the conflict has escalated into a civil, or even sectarian, war with daily bloodshed accompanied by flagrant violations of humanitarian law amounting to war crimes; whereas, according to the UNHCR, around one third of the country’s population of 22 million is displaced, with 2 396 861 – half of whom are children – being registered refugees in neighbouring countries; whereas this number is estimated to reach 4 million by the end of 2014 if the situation remains unresolved, adding to the already enormous pressure on neighbouring countries, and particularly on Lebanon;
- G. whereas a large part of the over half a million registered Palestinian refugees in Syria have been made refugees for a second time as they have had to flee refugee camps and towns in Syria as a result of military groups moving in and occupying the camps and violating the neutrality of the refugees; whereas many thousands have fled to Lebanon; whereas as a result of the presence of the armed groups and the consequent siege by government forces, an estimated 18 000 remain trapped in the unofficial camp of Yarmouk in the suburbs of Damascus and an estimated 4 000 in the camp of Sbeineh to the south of Damascus; whereas despite the limited delivery of humanitarian aid in recent days, the situation of the long-besieged is dire as people – mainly women, children and the elderly – reach starvation levels, with no humanitarian aid and no medical attention;

- H. whereas UNHCR and the inter-agency Syrian Regional Response have made an appeal for USD 4.2 billion to cover needs until the end of 2014;
- I. whereas, following an agreement on a framework for the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons reached on 14 September 2013 and certain delays linked to concerns over safe transportation to the port of Latakia, the first batch containing 4.1 % of the chemicals was shipped on 7 January, with hopes that the process will be speeded up;
- J. whereas looted German-French MILAN anti-tank missiles, large quantities of which were exported by Germany and France inter alia to Syria in the 1970s, were recently used in the north of Syria by the Al-Nusra front; whereas these MILAN anti-tank missiles have been clearly identified as manufactured in Germany and whereas Germany would always have a legal right of veto even if France had exported these missiles unilaterally;
- K. whereas the decision by the EU in May 2013 to lift the arms embargo on Syria, which entered into force on 1 June 2013, exacerbated the conflict, as this increased the volume of weapons and equipment, including dual-use goods, illegally crossing Syria's borders and arming the various military groups;
- L. whereas, according to unconfirmed information on 26 January 2014, Israel has bombed a base in Latakia;
- M. whereas the situation around Syria's land and sea borders, as well as in the Eastern Mediterranean, is extremely volatile, given the presence of various armies and fleets in the region; whereas this could easily spill across the borders and into the whole turbulent area, with unpredictable consequences;
1. Expresses its full support for a political solution to the conflict in Syria that will safeguard the unity, territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Syria, and guarantee the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Syrians, independent of ethnic or religious background; emphasises that there can be no military solution to the conflict and calls for an immediate ceasefire to stop the bloodshed; expresses its deep sorrow for the enormous loss of life and human suffering caused to the civilian population;
 2. Urges the Syrian Government and the Syrian National Coalition, as well as all interested parties and the permanent members of the UN Security Council, to work for progress at the second round of talks at the Geneva II Conference; calls on all groups from the political opposition to join the talks;
 3. Calls on all sides to urgently reach agreements to allow humanitarian and medical aid to enter the besieged towns and Palestinian refugee camps and to grant safe exit to the populations trapped there;
 4. Calls on all sides to agree to release or exchange prisoners and detainees as a confidence-building measure that will facilitate progress towards a political solution;
 5. Demands that all countries involved stop all forms of direct and indirect aid to the

armed groups fighting in Syria and exert pressure on groups with which they have links to withdraw their foreign fighters from Syria and to avoid any spillover into the neighbouring countries of this troubled region;

6. Insists that the Syrian Government meet the deadlines set and implement fully the agreement to hand over its chemical weapons to the OPCW for destruction;
7. Calls for increased international support and assistance for both internally displaced refugees and those crossing into neighbouring countries; raises the alarm about increased numbers of refugees risking their lives in open vessels to flee to Europe, and calls for asylum and support to be granted to them;
8. Insists that the future destiny of Syria must rest firmly in the hands of the Syrian people; supports a political solution to the conflict agreed by the Syrians, without any form of foreign intervention, that would allow for an inclusive national dialogue aimed at effectively addressing the legitimate aspirations and concerns of the Syrian people for political and democratic changes; is strongly against the use of the 'responsibility to protect' norm as an excuse to justify military intervention;
9. Stresses that the conflict has been exacerbated by the arms trade and the supply of weapons and even non-lethal equipment; calls on all countries to stop the supply of all kinds of weapons; calls on the EU Council to re-introduce the embargo on arms exports to Syria;
10. Calls on the EU Council to take the lead in convening an international conference on the prohibition and ecological destruction of the world's entire arsenal of weapons of mass destruction – nuclear, chemical and bacteriological;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of the Syrian Arab Republic, the Secretary-General of the Union for the Mediterranean and the League of Arab States.