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Plenary sitting

25.2.2014

B7-0218/2014

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 Venezuela
(2014/2600(RSP))

Renate Weber, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Marielle de Sarnez, Marietje Schaake, Ramon Tremosa i Balcells, Liam Aylward, Johannes Cornelis van Baalen
on behalf of the ALDE Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Venezuela
(2014/2600(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Venezuela,
 - having regard to the statement issued by the spokesperson of Catherine Ashton, Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, on 14 February 2014,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Venezuela is a party,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas since 12 February 2014 peaceful marches led by students have taken place across Venezuela and have ended in deadly violence, with at least 13 deaths, more than 70 injured and hundreds of people being detained; whereas the demands of the students referred to the failure of President Maduro's government to solve the high inflation, crime and shortage of some staples as well as to the increasing corruption, and the intimidation of the media and the democratic opposition; whereas the government has blamed the shortages on 'saboteurs' and 'profit-hungry corrupt businessmen'; whereas Venezuela is the country with the largest energy reserves in Latin America;
- B. whereas the political tension and polarisation is increasing in Venezuela; whereas, instead of contributing to the maintenance of peace and calm, the Venezuelan authorities have threatened to conduct an 'armed revolution'; whereas a number of peaceful civil society activists, students, journalists and opposition politicians are being subjected to harassment and arrest;
- C. whereas violent and uncontrolled armed pro-government groups have been acting with impunity in Venezuela for a long time; whereas the opposition has accused those groups of inciting violence during the peaceful demonstrations, causing deaths and several injuries; whereas the Venezuelan Government has not yet clarified the events;
- D. whereas media freedom is of primary importance for democracy and respect for fundamental freedoms, given its essential role in guaranteeing the free expression of opinions and ideas, with due respect for the rights of minorities, including political opposition groups, and in contributing to people's effective participation in democratic processes;
1. Condemns all acts of violence and the tragic loss of life during the peaceful demonstrations of 12 February 2014 and the following days, and expresses its sincere condolences to the families of the victims;

2. Expresses its strong solidarity with the Venezuelan people and its concern that new protests may lead to more acts of violence which would only deepen the gulf between the positions of government and opposition and polarise to an even greater degree the sensitive political developments that are taking place in Venezuela; calls on the representatives of all parties and sections of Venezuelan society to remain calm in both actions and words;
3. Reminds the Government of Venezuela that freedom of expression and the right to participate in peaceful demonstrations are fundamental human rights in any democracy, as recognised in the Venezuelan Constitution, and calls on President Maduro to abide by the international treaties to which Venezuela is a party, in particular the Inter-American Democratic Charter and the American Convention on Human Rights;
4. Reminds the Venezuelan Government of its obligation to ensure the security of all citizens in the country, regardless of their political views and affiliations; expresses deep concern at the arrests of students and opposition leaders and calls for their immediate release;
5. Recalls that respect for the principle of the separation of powers is fundamental in democracy and that the justice system may not be used by the authorities as a means of political persecution and repression of the democratic opposition; calls on the Venezuelan authorities to withdraw the unfounded charges and arrest warrants taken out against opposition leaders;
6. Calls on the Venezuelan authorities to immediately disarm and dissolve the uncontrolled armed groups that have a pro-government character and to end their impunity; calls for clarification regarding the deaths that have occurred so that the perpetrators are held accountable for their actions;
7. Encourages all parties, in particular the Venezuelan authorities, to pursue peaceful dialogue, reaching out to all segments of Venezuelan society in order to define points of convergence and to allow political actors to discuss the most serious problems facing the country;
8. Regrets the existence of media and web censorship and the fact that access to some blogs and social networks is limited; recalls that respect for political pluralism, freedom of expression and opinion, the protection of journalists and a free and independent media sector are fundamental elements of the democratic political process;
9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Government and National Assembly of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly and the Secretary-General of the Organisation of American States.