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Plenary sitting

15.4.2014

B7-0387/2014

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 certain vulnerable communities in Syria
(2014/2695(RSP))

Charles Tannock, Ruža Tomašić, Adam Bielan
on behalf of the ECR Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in certain vulnerable communities in Syria
(2014/2695(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria,
 - having regard to the previous Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on Syria, most recently those of 20 January 2014,
 - having regard to the previous statements by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on Syria,
 - having regard to the previous UN General Assembly resolutions on Syria,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the additional protocols thereto,
 - having regard to the Joint Communication of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission of 25 May 2011 entitled ‘A new Response to a Changing Neighbourhood’,
 - having regard to the final communiqué issued by the Action Group for Syria, dated 30 June 2012, hereinafter referred to as ‘the Geneva communiqué’,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the unrest and bloodshed in Syria is now in its third year, with no apparent immediate prospect of an end to the fighting;
- B. whereas civil unrest and the Syrian authorities’ brutal repression of the Syrian people, including the reported use of chemical weapons, have dragged the country into a state of civil war, which in turn risks creating a wider regional conflict;
- C. whereas more than 150 000 Syrians have been killed since the fighting began;
- D. whereas in 2013 more than 1 200 Christians were killed in Syria; whereas the Christian population in Syria is estimated to be around 1.3 million;
- E. whereas President Assad has repeatedly ignored countless calls by the international community to put an end to the horrific violence in Syria;
- F. whereas violence, including the use of heavy artillery and shelling against populated areas, and horrific killings by the Syrian army and security forces and the Shabiha, as well as by various opposition forces, has continued to escalate;

- G. whereas the use of torture, mass arrests and widespread destruction of populated areas has dramatically escalated over the past months; and whereas large numbers of Syrians are being displaced, some even being forced to move further away from the needed humanitarian assistance;
- H. whereas thousands of Syrians are fleeing the fighting on a daily basis to neighbouring countries in search of safety and protection, only to remain vulnerable in refugee camps;
- I. whereas the countries most dramatically impacted by the conflict and the refugee outflow are Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey;
- J. whereas representatives of the Syrian Government and members of the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces agreed to participate in international peace talks convened by the United Nations peace envoy to Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi, held in Montreux and Geneva in January and February 2014; and whereas a further round of talks has not so far been scheduled;
- K. whereas in March 2012 Bassel Safadi Khartabil was detained by the Syrian authorities and remains incarcerated despite never having been formally charged with a crime;
- L. whereas the city of Homs remains under siege, and conditions for the many civilians still trapped inside continue to worsen, and whereas on 7 April 2014 gunmen shot and killed Father Frans van der Lugt, who had chosen to remain in Homs to help those people caught up in the terrible conditions inside the city;
1. Deplores the violence, intimidation and torture perpetrated against men, women and children by those engaged in the internal conflict in Syria;
 2. Condemns in the strongest possible terms the mass killing of civilians with chemical weapons on 21 August 2013, and welcomes the ongoing efforts to remove such weapons from Syria;
 3. Underlines the urgent need for focused international and regional efforts in order to solve the Syrian crisis; continues to urge all members of the UN Security Council to honour their responsibilities with regard to the crisis; urges all countries active in promoting a solution to the crisis to support these efforts;
 5. Expresses its grave concern at the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Syria and the implications for the neighbouring countries; is concerned, furthermore, at the fact that the exodus of refugees from Syria continues to accelerate;
 6. Regrets the worsening situation for Syria's many minorities, including the Christian community in the country, and strongly condemns the high number of killings of Christians in Syria; Stresses that all minorities should be respected and not threatened, and that their protection should not be conditional or predicated on support of the authorities or other actors in the Syrian conflict;
 7. Expresses its deepest regret about the killing of Father Frans van der Lugt, who had chosen to remain in Homs in solidarity with its people; Calls for those responsible to be brought

to justice, and underlines that agreements must be reached guaranteeing immediate and full humanitarian access and exit from areas under siege;

8. Calls for all human rights activists, journalists and other prisoners of conscience presently detained by the Syrian authorities under false allegations or without formal charge to be released, and in particular calls for the release of Bassel Safadi Khartabil who remains under arrest without access to legal counsel or facing formal charges and has allegedly faced tortured while held in military jail;
8. Commends the response of the governments of neighbouring countries, in particular Turkey and Lebanon, in providing humanitarian support to Syrian refugees; acknowledges that providing this support has put additional pressure on existing services and budgets in those countries; calls on the international community to support the countries thus affected;
9. Notes that President Assad, as the constitutional and legal head of the Syrian state, bears ultimate responsibility for all actions carried out by the armed forces in Syria; urges President Assad to recognise the rejection of his regime by the Syrian people and to step aside in the best interests of his country and the unity of its people;
10. Calls for all in Syria to subscribe to the principles of human rights and democracy and to engage with the international community in bringing the conflict to a peaceful conclusion;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the Arab League, the Government and Parliament of the Syrian Arab Republic, and the governments and parliaments of Syria's neighbour countries.