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## 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 Syria: situation in certain vulnerable communities  
(2014/2695(RSP))

**Véronique De Keyser, Ana Gomes, Joanna Senyszyn, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg, Mitro Repo, María Muñoz De Urquiza, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Antigoni Papadopoulou**  
on behalf of the S&D Group

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

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria, in particular that of 6 February 2014 on the situation in Syria;
- having regard to the Council conclusions on Syria of 20 January 2014;
- having regard to the statements of High Representative Catherine Ashton on the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the Syrian uprising of 15 March 2014 and in reference to the killing of Father Van der Lugt, SJ in Homs, Syria of 8 April 2014;
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948;
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966;
- having regard to UN Security Council resolution 2139 of 22 February 2014;
- having regard to Rule 122 (2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas Syrian society is composed of a multitude of ethnic and religious communities, including Arabs, Arameans, Armenians, Assyrians, Circassians, Kurds, Turkmens and other ethnic groups, as well as Muslims, Christians, Druze and other religious groups; whereas these communities have lived together for centuries and created a vibrant society and a unique cultural heritage in Syria;

B. whereas the on-going violent crisis in Syria has resulted in a humanitarian catastrophe of a scale unprecedented in recent history, with no end in sight; whereas ethnic and religious minorities find themselves in a particularly vulnerable situation in the conflict;

C. whereas, being aware of their vulnerability, many minority communities have tried to avoid taking side in the conflict; whereas, however, all of them have paid a heavy price in the crisis by being attacked, besieged, exploited or instrumentalised by the regime and some rebel groups;

D. whereas the Syrian regime continues to abuse and manipulate minorities for its own purposes in its propaganda; whereas the increasing presence and infiltration of Islamist extremists and jihadists in the conflict has created legitimate concerns among minority communities in the country;

E. whereas a political solution safeguarding the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria is the only possible solution to the current violent crisis; whereas minority communities have a crucial role to play in this process in order to build a democratic and prosperous Syria for future generations;

F. whereas the fights between regime forces and rebel fighters, including elements linked to Al-Qaeda, at the end of March 2014 led to the evacuation of the vast majority of the Armenian population of Kassab, an Armenian town on the Syrian-Turkish border; whereas there are contradicting reports about the number of victims in these events;

G. whereas Father Frans Van der Lugt, a Jesuit who had chosen to stay in the besieged area of Homs to help the local Christian and Muslim population in their everyday suffering, was killed on 7 April 2014; whereas Christians, who constitute around 10 per cent of the country's population, continue to be trapped in the crisis in Syria;

H. whereas Palestine refugees remain a particularly vulnerable group in the crisis in Syria; whereas many of them live in besieged areas, in particular in Yarmouk camp which continues to be under heavy attack by regime forces and various armed groups, leading to inhuman suffering of the 18,000 Palestinians staying in this area; whereas almost all of the 540,000 Palestine refugees in Syria are in need of assistance today, with more than half of them being internally displaced within the country, and they face major obstacles or increasing restrictions when trying to flee to Egypt, Jordan or Lebanon;

I. whereas women and children continue to suffer from aggression, sexual and gender-based violence, abuse and the lack of basic goods and services in the on-going crisis in Syria; whereas, according to UNICEF, more than 4 million children are affected by the crisis, while more than 1,3 million children from Syria are registered or are awaiting registration with UNHCR in neighbouring countries; whereas nearly 3 million children have dropped out of school in Syria since 2011, while at least 500,000 registered child refugees are not enrolled in schools in neighbouring countries;

J. whereas human rights defenders, intellectuals, religious figures, journalists and civil society activists continue to be victims of the violent crisis in Syria; whereas 2011 Sakharov Prize winner Razan Zaitouneh, who was kidnapped together with her husband and two other human rights activists more than four months ago in Douma, continues to be held at an unknown place;

K. whereas UN Security Council resolution 2139 stressed the need to end impunity for violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights, and reaffirmed that those who had committed or were otherwise responsible for such violations and abuses in Syria must be brought to justice;

1. Expresses again its deepest concern about the increasing sectarianism, religiously and ethnically motivated violence, and the continued infiltration of Islamist extremists and jihadists in the Syrian crisis;

2. Expresses its solidarity to the families of all innocent victims in the crisis in Syria; commends the exemplary commitment of Father Frans Van der Lugt to helping the local Christian and Muslim population in their everyday suffering in the besieged area of Homs, and mourns his assassination;

3. Condemns all acts of violence, harassment or repression against any ethnic or religious minority community in Syria, and calls for the protection of these communities; calls on all actors involved in the conflict to put an immediate end to any manipulation or instrumentalisation of minorities in the crisis;
4. Stresses the importance of the participation and contribution of all parts of Syrian society, including ethnic and religious minorities, in any political process aimed at finding a solution to the current crisis in the country; underlines the crucial role of minorities in the fields of preserving the unique cultural heritage and the tradition of intercultural, interethnic and interreligious coexistence in Syria and of creating a vibrant society for future generations of Syrians;
5. Calls again for special attention to the vulnerable situation of Palestine refugees in Syria, and particularly the inhuman living conditions of Palestinians staying in Yarmouk camp; reiterates its call to all the parties involved in the conflict to allow UNRWA and other international aid organisations unhindered access to this camp, as well as to all other besieged areas in the country, in order to alleviate the extreme suffering of the local population; commends the work of UNRWA in Syria and calls for increased international support for its activities;
6. Calls on the international community and the EU to pay special attention to the suffering and needs of women and children in the Syrian crisis; calls for zero tolerance on the killing, abduction and recruitment of children in particular, as well as for strengthening humanitarian aid capacities in the field of support to traumatised victims of such crimes;
7. Urges again the EU and its Member States to make all possible efforts to achieve the release of 2011 Sakharov Prize winner Razan Zaitouneh, as well as of all other human rights activists, intellectuals, religious figures, journalists, photographers and civil society activists held by the regime or rebel fighters in Syria;
8. Commends the work of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and of other international actors in the field of collecting and preserving a large volume of testimony on serious crimes committed by the regime and some rebel groups in Syria, and calls for action in order to bring those responsible for these crimes to justice;
9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the High Representative/Vice-President, the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Secretary General of the United Nations, the UN-Arab League Special Envoy to Syria, and all the parties involved in the conflict in Syria.