



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Plenary sitting

16.12.2014

B8-0378/2014

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 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on Persecution of the democratic opposition in Venezuela
(2014/2998(RSP))

Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Ignazio Corrao
on behalf of the EFDD Group

**European Parliament resolution on Persecution of the democratic opposition in Venezuela
(2014/2998(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Venezuela,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Venezuela is a party,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the statements of The Spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the start of a dialogue in Venezuela on 28 March 2014 and on 15 April 2014
 - having regards to UN Committee against Torture’s Concluding Observations on Venezuela, 24 November 2014
 - having regards to The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein statement of 20 October 2014
 - having regards to concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, 3 November 2014
 - having regards to concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 23 September 2013
- A. whereas levels of violence, including political violence, are high in Venezuela; whereas in the immediate aftermath of the presidential elections of 14 April 2013, which resulted in a victory for the candidate Nicolás Maduro, 11 persons of his political colour were assassinated
- B. whereas President Nicolas Maduro has declared that since his election last year, there have been five assassination attempts against him and more than a dozen acts of sabotage and conspiracy
- C. whereas Venezuela is the world’s fifth largest oil-exporting country and has the world’s largest proven oil reserves
- D. whereas the economic model with its redistribution and investment in social programmes in Venezuela still largely depends on oil revenues;

- E. whereas Venezuela is the country of the region which has most reduced levels of inequality over the past ten years, according to the President of CEPAL (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), Alicia Bárcena, , has drastically lowered poverty rates and has invested large sums in social programmes, in particular health, education and housing; whereas despite these facts, criminality, including murder rates and general insecurity in the public sphere, remains dramatically high and needs to be curbed;
 - F. whereas 19 different elections have taken place in Venezuela in the last 14 years; whereas the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela includes mechanisms of participative democracy, such as the provision for a referendum revoking the President's mandate;
 - G. whereas this wave of subversive violence is happening at a time when the legitimate authorities of Venezuela are intensifying measures to combat the various forms of speculation and economic warfare affecting the country;
 - H. whereas, according to UN Committee against Torture's Concluding Observations on Venezuela of 24 November 2014, there is a report of : number of detentions; allegations of torture and ill-treatment of people detained after demonstrations February-July 2014; military participation in halting demonstrations and attacks allegedly committed by pro-government armed groups;
 - I. whereas Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Pérez Esquivel has called for the defence of democracy in Venezuela against attempts to destabilise the government,
 - J. whereas legitimate demands for change have to be carried out via a peaceful debate involving all sectors concerned
 - K. whereas freedom of expression and the right to take part in peaceful demonstrations are the cornerstones of democracy; whereas equality and justice for all are impossible without respect for the fundamental freedoms and rights of every citizen
 - L. whereas only respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, constructive and respectful dialogue conducted in a spirit of tolerance can help the country emerge from this serious crisis and overcome future difficulties;
1. Condemns the acts of violence disrupting the peaceful demonstrations and in particular the resulting loss of life ; expresses its condolences to the families of the victims;
 2. Calls for an end to the violence and for dialogue across the entire political spectrum to guarantee public safety and protection, together with a return to calm and normality;
 3. Deplores the destruction of public property in the country and calls for an immediate end to the violence
 4. Calls on the Venezuelan authorities to ensure that armed groups to surrender their weapons immediately and disband, ending their impunity and demanding information concerning crimes committed; Call on the Venezuelan authorities to release arbitrarily

detained , including students , opposition leaders, journalists and peaceful protesters

5. Demands that all crimes in the context of the violent acts perpetrated since the beginning of February be fully investigated, and their perpetrators brought before the courts and adequately punished; Call on the Venezuelan authorities to ensure that due process are followed during all trials, in accordance with international standards
6. 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;
7. 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,
8. Welcomes all efforts to bring all the parties to the table as these are important steps towards addressing the legitimate concerns of the people of Venezuela through continued and frank dialogue ; calls the national government, leaders of opposition , students and the Venezuelan civil society to an inclusive dialogue and to work together to immediately stop any form of violence and to find a consensus in order to overcome the current situation;
9. Reminds the Venezuelan Government of its obligation to ensure the security of all citizens in the country, regardless of their political views and affiliations; Reminds that respect for the principle of the separation of powers is fundamental in democracy;
10. 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;
11. 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;
12. Recalls the importance of Venezuela's role in the creation and strengthening of a cooperation and integration process for the benefit of the peoples of Latin America
13. 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;
14. Reaffirms its conviction that the results of democratic elections, in particular the recent one in December 2013, have to be respected and that any critique with respect to

government policies has to be carried out in a peaceful manner and within the rule of law; Underlines that all legitimate demands for change have to be carried out via a peaceful debate involving all sectors concerned

15. Recalls the importance of respecting basic human rights and the freedom of expression in all circumstances, and encourages all participants to aim at obtaining concrete results
16. Recalls that freedom of information is a fundamental human right, and urges all national and international medias to expose the situation objectively, having an impartial position and act responsibly by covering the events in a fair, accurate and balanced manner.
17. Recalls that Article 58 of the Constitution of Venezuela explicitly prohibits censorship of the media; expects, on the other hand, responsible journalism on the part of the media, condemns any media-led instigations of violence, and asks the media to refrain from such actions in the future;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and National Assembly of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly