



Plenary sitting

B8-1027/2015

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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 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on the displacement of children in Northern Nigeria as a result of Boko Haram attacks

(2015/2876(RSP))

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on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

**European Parliament resolution on the displacement of children in Northern Nigeria as a result of Boko Haram attacks
(2015/2876(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Nigeria and in particular to its most recent plenary debate on the matter, of 30 April 2015,
- having regard to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, including those of 8 January, 19 January, 31 March, and 14 and 15 April 2015, 3 and 27 July,
- having regard to the EU Council conclusions on abduction in Nigeria of 9 February 2015,
- having regard to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 583/2014 of 28 May 2014 which added Boko Haram to the list of persons, groups and entities covered by the freezing of funds and economic resources,
- having regard to the statements by the High Commissioner of the United Nations for Human Rights on the possibility that members of Boko Haram could be accused of war crimes,
- having regard to the ECOWAS Political Declaration and Common Position against Terrorism of 2013, which provides for a regional Counter-Terrorism Strategy and an Implementation Plan to help member states to combat terrorism,
- having regard to the UN Security Council Presidential Statement of 19 January 2015, which demanded the cessation of hostilities by Boko Haram in Nigeria and the release of hostages, while on 14 February 2015 the UN Security Council condemned Boko Haram attacks, including those on civilians in Chad, Cameroon and Niger,
- having regard to the 24th African Union Summit of January 2015, which welcomed and supported the efforts deployed by Member States of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Republic of Benin to establish a Joint Military Staff Headquarters for conduct of military operations against the Boko Haram terrorist group,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, ratified by Nigeria on 29 October 1993,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979,
- having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 1981, ratified by

Nigeria on 22 June 1983,

- having regard to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion and Belief of 1981,
 - having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Nigeria in 1991,
 - having regard to the second revision of the Cotonou Agreement, ratified by Nigeria on 27 September 2010,
 - having regard to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria adopted on 29 May 1999, and in particular the provisions of Chapter IV on the protection of fundamental rights, including the right to life, the right to a fair hearing, the right to the dignity of human persons, and the protection of freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom of thought, freedom of conscience and freedom of religion,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Boko Haram aims to establish a fully Islamic state in Nigeria, including the implementation of criminal sharia courts across the country, and to forbid western education, particularly to females;
- B. whereas Boko Haram has attacked Nigeria's police and military, politicians, schools, religious buildings, public institutions and civilians with increasing regularity since 2009, while terrorist acts against civilians continued to escalate by 2013;
- C. whereas in 2015 alone, Boko Haram has killed more than 3.500 civilians;
- D. whereas the Boko Haram attacks have resulted in a massive displacement of local population, including 1.4 million children;
- E. whereas in the last five months alone, 500.000 children had to flee their homes;
- F. whereas women and girls have been sexually enslaved, raped and forced into so-called "marriages"; whereas many survivors of these horrific experiences are now pregnant by their rapists;
- G. whereas the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights recommends to "provide remedies for women and girls whose human rights have been violated, including for sexual violence, establishing a mechanism for nullifying forced marriages, provision of psychosocial counselling, rehabilitation and social reintegration, comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, including HIV treatment, safe abortion services at a minimum in cases of rape, and to preserve the life and health of the woman or girl, with the full, free and informed consent of the woman or girl, and measures to address stigma against women and girl victims of sexual violence and their child" (Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on violations and abuses committed by Boko Haram and the impact on human rights in the affected countries, 29 September 2015);

- H. whereas in April 2014 more than 270 girls were kidnapped from a government school in Chibok (Borno state); whereas the majority remain missing; whereas since then hundreds more people have been abducted by Boko Haram;
- I. whereas girls as young as 10 years old have been used to carry explosives that detonated in busy markets and bus stations, raising fears that Boko Haram may be using some of its hundreds of kidnapped victims in bomb attacks;
- J. whereas Boko Haram's international connections to al-Shabaab in Somalia and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) provide financial support, training and equipment, but whereas Boko Haram is so diffuse that fighters associated with it do not necessarily follow the Salafi doctrine; whereas Boko Haram also generates funds i.e. through drug trafficking, smuggling, weapons trafficking, kidnappings and begging; whereas in addition, some politicians are reportedly supporting the organisation directly;
- K. whereas the Nigerian Government has not been able to quell the insurgency; whereas Nigerian soldiers have carried out mass incarcerations and detentions, as well as extrajudicial killings and other large numbers of violations of human and international law;
- L. whereas following the publication of an Amnesty International report on 3 June, President Buhari pledged to investigate evidence that Nigerian military forces have committed serious human rights violations, war crimes and acts which may constitute crimes against humanity; whereas to date, no investigation has begun;
- M. whereas the humanitarian situation is dreadful and continues to deteriorate with worsening food insecurity combined with poor access to education, safe drinking water and health services; whereas many families are left without health services, such as routine immunization, maternal and childcare; whereas across the four countries, more than 1100 schools are closed due to the conflict and teachers and students have been deliberately targeted by armed groups;
- N. whereas humanitarian aid needs are far from being met by corresponding funds; e.g. UNICEF has received only 32 percent of the US\$ 50.3 million required this year for its humanitarian response across the Lake Chad region; whereas without additional financial support, hundreds of thousands of children will have no access to basic health care, safe drinking water and education;
- O. whereas Nigeria assembled a joint task force (JTF) of military and police units to battle Boko Haram and declared a state of emergency in three northeast states – Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa – in May 2013, but whereas the move pushed the militants out of cities and attacks in rural areas continued;
- P. whereas Boko Haram's nearly six-year insurgency spilled over from Nigeria into Cameroon in 2013 and into neighbours Chad and Niger;
- Q. whereas in May 2014, Chad and Cameroon agreed to deploy thousands of soldiers to their borders to work together with the Nigerian army, as the Government of Nigeria has found it extremely difficult to handle the crisis;

- R. whereas the Boko Haram terrorist attacks have starkly revealed the inefficiencies of the authorities to address insecurity; whereas poor governance, omnipresent corruption and worsening socio-economic conditions in northern Nigeria are components of the security problem;
 - S. whereas economic growth in Nigeria is highly unequal; whereas levels of poverty and unemployment in northern Nigeria are considerably higher than in the oil-rich south;
 - T. whereas Boko Haram appeals to the young and poor, and whereas due to their socio-economic circumstances, they are particularly vulnerable to indoctrination and radicalisation by religious fanaticism;
 - U. whereas decades of economic mismanagement, instability and corruption have hindered investment in Nigeria's education and social services systems;
 - V. whereas the oil and gas sectors remain the main sources of revenue in Nigeria; whereas both of these sectors are located mainly in the southern part of the country; whereas the northern economy, which is dominated by agricultural production, is also experiencing the effects of climate change, deindustrialisation owing i.a. to energy shortages and the deterioration of infrastructure;
 - W. whereas by some estimates, between USD 3 and 8 billion of Nigerian oil is stolen annually; whereas decades of corruption and misrule have undermined the state's authority and legitimacy;
 - X. whereas a development-focused response to the crisis, a 'Marshall plan for the North' was announced only in April 2014 by the Nigerian authorities;
1. Strongly condemns all human rights abuses by Boko Haram since 2009, including those involving violence against civilian populations, notably women and children, kidnappings, killings, hostage-taking, pillaging, rape, sexual slavery and other sexual violence, recruitment of children to act as suicide bombers, destruction of civilian property, as well as the attacks in the Lake Chad Basin region along Nigeria's borders with Chad and Cameroon and in the northern provinces in Cameroon;
 2. Recalls that, while Boko Haram was becoming more violent, harsh government treatment, including pervasive police brutality, and violent clashes between Christians and Muslims enabled the group to radicalise; in particular, points out that the Nigerian police was responsible for hundreds of extrajudicial killings and disappearances each year that largely went uninvestigated and unpunished; welcomes the pledge by President Buhari to investigate evidence that Nigerian military forces have committed serious human rights violations, war crimes and acts which may constitute crimes against humanity; regrets however that until today no real action has been taken;
 3. Believes that the Nigerian Government has the right and responsibility to defend its people from terrorism, but insists that such actions must be conducted with respect for human rights and the rule of law;

4. Points out that while Boko Haram's insurgency initially emerged as a localised Nigerian problem, it has, over time, transformed into a major threat to peace and security in the West African region; accordingly, calls on the Nigerian Government to develop a comprehensive strategy that addresses the root causes of these dynamics, focusing on a soft approach that aims to erode the appeal of Boko Haram's ideology, inhibit opportunities for recruitment and radicalisation and cut off its financial funding;
5. In particular, deems that robust and targeted interventions to create jobs in Nigeria, especially in the north, and amongst the border communities of neighbouring countries at large, should form a key priority of the states to dry up Boko Haram's recruiting base;
6. Urges donors to increase their humanitarian assistance to refugees, internally displaced people and host communities in Nigeria and neighbouring countries and to give address the huge problem of sexual slavery, rape and its consequences, in particular when it comes to physical and psychological health of victims, exclusion of girls and women from local communities and unwanted pregnancies;
7. Asks the newly-elected President to maintain his campaign promises and to use available resources to end the violence of Boko Haram, re-establishing stability and security over the whole country; reiterates, in this context, that a military approach alone will not suffice to counter the Boko Haram insurgency, but deems that regional peace and security will only be achieved through a multi-dimensional approach that addresses legitimate grievances, past and current human rights violations and root causes of the conflict;
8. Recalls that while Nigeria is Africa's largest economy, largest oil producer and most populous country, its human development indicators are among the world's lowest, and a majority of the population lives in extreme poverty;
9. Recalls that Boko Haram's origins are rooted in grievances over poor governance, pervasive corruption and sharp inequality in Nigerian society; in a context where levels of poverty and unemployment in northern Nigeria are considerably higher than in the oil-rich south, urges the newly-elected President to implement the 'Marshall plan for the North'; in particular, urges the Nigerian authorities to eliminate corruption, mismanagement and inefficiencies within the public institutions, to provide better education and health care services in the north and to ensure fair repartition of benefits from oil wealth to ensure proper regional development;
10. Calls on the Nigerian authorities and foreign companies to help strengthen governance in the extractives sector by abiding by the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and publishing what companies pay to the Nigerian Government;
11. In a context where state responses and police brutality and impunity added to the tensions and escalation of violence, stresses that improving the human rights record of the Nigerian security forces is essential to combat Boko Haram, since it could boost public confidence in the Nigerian security forces, thus encouraging citizens to share information on the insurgents and their collaborators;

12. More broadly, urges the newly-elected President to eradicate the root causes of radicalisation; this should include measures that put an end to the culture of entrenched impunity and human rights abuses, i.e. by pursuing vigorous reforms of the judicial system; actively engage in addressing the governance deficit and corruption at all levels; adopt measures to deprive Boko Haram of its sources of illegal income, through cooperation with neighbouring countries, in particular with regard to smuggling and trafficking; step up measures to reverse negative socio-economic disparities; encourage and facilitate dialogue across all Nigerian states, ethnic and religious groups, with a view to embarking on a comprehensive decentralisation reform process; fight against tax evasion and illicit financial flows;
13. Reiterates its call for the immediate release of those who have been abducted, including the girls from Chibok; stresses that those responsible for all abuses and violations of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law must be held accountable;
14. Urges that girls and women who are victims of rape in the context of armed conflict be offered the full range of sexual and reproductive health services, including abortion, in EU-funded humanitarian facilities, in accordance with the Geneva Conventions' common Article 3 guaranteeing all necessary medical care required by the condition of the wounded and sick, and without adverse distinction;
15. Welcomes the determination expressed at the Niamey Regional Summit of 20 and 21 January 2015 by the 13 participating countries, in particular the military commitment of Chad, together with Cameroon and Nigeria, to the fight against the terrorist threats of Boko Haram; encourages a strengthening of this regional response;
16. Welcomes the initiatives of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and calls on the African Union to engage, as a matter of urgency, in concrete action, together with all countries involved, to coordinate the fight against terrorist groups in the Sahel region; but recalls that measures taken to combat the terrorist threat of Boko Haram should be conducted in line with international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law;
17. Calls on ECOWAS to continue the operationalisation of its new Counter-Terrorism Strategy, paying particular attention to the containment of trans-border illicit flows of arms, weapons, fighters and contraband; likewise, deems that the ECOWAS strategy should include a soft approach of improving state services, strengthening of governance and humanitarian aid for those affected by terrorism; urges the EU to facilitate intra-regional initiatives;
18. Calls upon religious authorities in Nigeria to cooperate in the fight against radicalisation and to use their influence in order to prevent the spread of the fundamentalist Boko Haram ideology;
19. Urges the VP/HR and the EU to remain committed to their diplomatic efforts in Nigeria, with humanitarian aid assistance to the populations affected by the crisis as well as long-term development cooperation in order to achieve peace, security, good governance and respect for human rights; in particular, urges them to continue political dialogue with Nigeria under Article 8 of the revised Cotonou Agreement, and

in that context to address issues relating to universal human rights, including freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, and non-discrimination on any grounds, as enshrined in universal, regional and national human rights instruments;

20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and 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 Federal Government of Nigeria, the institutions of the African Union and of ECOWAS, the United Nations Secretary-General, the United Nations General Assembly, the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and the PAN-African Parliament (PAP).