



Plenary sitting

B8-0479/2016

12.4.2016

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 Nigeria
(2016/2649(RSP))

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on behalf of the ECR Group

B8-0479/2016

**European Parliament resolution on Nigeria
(2016/2649(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Nigeria, including those of 29 April 2015 and 16 July 2014;
- having regard to the previous statements of the Vice President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the situation in Nigeria;
- having regard to Council Conclusions on the situation in Nigeria, including that of 9 February 2015;
- having regard to the previous statements of the Secretary General of the United Nations on the situation in Nigeria;
- having regard to the Council decision to add Boko Haram to the EU list of designated terrorist organisations, which entered into force on 29 May 2014
- having regard to the second revision of the Cotonou Agreement 2007-2013, ratified by Nigeria on 27 September 2010;
- having regard to the Declaration of Human Rights of 1948;
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1979;
- 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 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 1981, ratified by Nigeria on 22 June 1983;
- having regard to the second revision of the Cotonou Agreement 2007-2013, ratified by Nigeria on 27 September 2010;
- having regard to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in particular its provisions on the protection of freedom of religion in Chapter IV – Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,
- having regard to the outcome of the Nigerian Presidential elections of March 2015;
- having regard to Rule 123 of its Rules of Procedure;

A. Whereas despite having the largest economy in Africa with vast resources, Nigeria ranks as one of the most unequal countries in the world, with widespread corruption contributing significantly to economic and social disparity;

B. Whereas years of military dictatorship, corruption, political instability and poor governance have meant insufficient investments in the country's infrastructure and basic services;

C. Whereas the peaceful transition to power of President Muhammadu Buhari in March 2015 held out the hope for a renewed focus on economic renewal, efforts to clean up corruption, combat violence and insurgency, and to tackle inequality;

D. Whereas those efforts have been undermined by a flagging economy, caused by low global oil prices, weak political institutions, the failure to tackle corruption, and unresolved conflicts in the Niger Delta and in the Middle Belt;

E. Whereas the organisation Transparency International ranked Nigeria 136th out of 175 countries in its 2015 Corruption Perceptions Index;

F. Whereas peace and stability in Nigeria have been threatened by the wave of attacks, killings, and kidnappings by the Islamist group Boko Haram since 2009; whereas it is estimated that more than 2.2 million people have been displaced and more than 14.8 million affected by the Boko Haram insurgency;

G. Whereas on 14 April 2014 Boko Haram kidnapped more than 200 girls from their school in Chibok, northern Nigeria; whereas their exact fate remains a mystery though it is feared most were forced to either marry insurgents, forced to fight themselves, face sexual violence, or sold into slavery, while non-Muslim girls were forced to convert to Islam;

H. Whereas the plight of the Chibok schoolgirls has exposed wider problems in the Borno province of northern Nigeria, with regular attacks on schools, a lack of teachers, and the urgent need for international funding to repair and rebuild shattered buildings; whereas the lack of educational opportunities mean some children have not been schooled for many years;

I. Whereas Nigeria's 167 million population is evenly split between Muslims and Christians; whereas an estimated 30 million Christians live in northern Nigeria, forming the largest religious minority in the mainly Muslim region;

J. Whereas in the last year there has reportedly been a 62 per cent increase in the number of Christians killed in northern Nigeria; whereas figures show that in 2015 there were 4,028 deaths and 198 attacks on churches; whereas Boko Haram has also targeted Muslims in its wave of violence, and its wave of attacks has caused immense suffering to people of all faiths and ethnicities;

K. Whereas in response to the attacks President Buhari has said the government will defend Nigerians' right to worship freely;

L. Whereas counter-insurgency measures are failing to provide adequate protection for civilians, particularly in the three north-eastern states of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe, where

people face intense attacks on their communities and systematic human rights violations;

M. Whereas Christian farmers in the Middle Belt states of Nigeria have also been attacked by predominantly Muslim Hausa Fulani herdsmen, leading to hundreds of deaths, the destruction of places of worship, and attacks on women; whereas while the Nigerian constitution guarantees freedom of thought, conscience and religion, the Nigerian government has failed, in this regard, to uphold those rights by protecting Christian farmers;

N. Whereas there are moves by the governments of Adamawa, Kaduna, Nasarawa and Taraba states to establish grazing fields for Hausa Fulani Muslim herdsmen with swathes of indigenous Christian land being taken away for that purpose;

1. Is deeply concerned by the significant social, economic and political challenges facing Nigeria and encourages President Muhammadu Buhari to fulfil the commitments made during his election campaign to address these issues in the interests of all Nigerians;

2. Regrets the lack of real progress in addressing the corruption which has blighted Nigerian society for decades and believes that without tough action to eradicate such crimes the Buhari government's wider political, economic and social agenda cannot be fulfilled;

3. Believes the fight against corruption must be led by the Nigerian authorities, and warns the Government of Nigeria that the failure to do so will mean more years of poverty, inequality, reputational damage, and reduced external investment, as well as undermining the life opportunities of young people; further offers its support in this objective, and in seeking to break the link between corrupt practices and terrorism;

4. Condemns the ongoing violence in Nigeria which has resulted in the deaths of thousands of innocent men, women and children, and displaced millions more;

5. Repeats its call for concerted international efforts to end the bloodshed in Nigeria, and believes this can only be achieved through greater regional cooperation between Nigeria and neighbouring countries;

6. Supports the Nigerian Government in its commitment to defend its citizens from terrorism, but insists that such actions must be conducted in full accordance with the respect for human rights and the rule of law;

7. Regrets that despite initial international attention, the plight of the 200-plus schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram in April 2014 has largely been forgotten about; believes the second anniversary of their abduction should be used to provide fresh impetus to secure their immediate and unconditional release;

8. Notes with concern attacks on schools in northern Nigeria which is denying children educational opportunities and risks fuelling the radicalisation on which terrorist groups like Boko Haram depend;

9. Welcomes the support of EU Member States in increasing assistance and advice to the Nigerian armed forces to help combat Boko Haram; further believes such support is vital for the long-term stability and security of Nigeria and the wider region;

10. Condemns the upturn in violence towards Christians in Nigeria, including the targeting of religious institutions and worshippers, and further notes that Boko Haram has struck Muslim, Christian, and other faiths without distinction;

11. Condemns the attacks on Christian farmers by predominantly Muslim herdsmen and the threat to their grazing lands;

12. Calls on President Buhari to ensure his government defends Nigerians' right to worship freely, and the rights of all its citizens more widely, in line with the country's laws and constitution;

13. Welcomes the work of the 100 Women Lobby Group in promoting the participation of women in politics in Nigeria, and calls on the Nigerian government to intensify efforts to increase opportunities for women and girls in all sections of society;

14. Notes that despite the country's massive energy resources more than half the people of Nigeria currently live without electricity, and calls for renewed efforts, with international support, to tackle this issue as a vehicle for transforming lives and opportunities;

15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the EEAS, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the chairman of the African Union, and the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and the Pan-African Parliament.