



Plenary sitting

B8-0481/2016

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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 Nigeria
2016/2649

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on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

B8-0481/2016

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

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Nigeria,
- 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, 31 March and 27 July,
- having regard to the EU Council conclusions on abductions in Nigeria of 14 May 2014 and on the Boko Haram threat of 9 February 2015,
- having regard to the press release on the Ministerial Dialogue Meeting between HR/VP Federica Mogherini and Geoffrey Onyeama, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in Brussels, 15 March 2016
- having regard to the report of 29 September 2015 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,
- 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 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 Nigeria, the most populous state and biggest economy in Africa, is facing enormous challenges, due to the Boko Haram terror, widespread corruption, dwindling state revenues due to low oil prices, waste of public money, large inequalities and a North-South divide, partly based on religious differences;
 - B. whereas Nigeria held presidential elections in 2015 which led to a peaceful transition of power;
 - C. whereas the benefits of economic wealth in Nigeria is highly unequal; whereas levels of poverty and unemployment in northern Nigeria are considerably higher than in the oil-rich south;
 - D. whereas decades of economic mismanagement, instability and corruption have hindered investment in Nigeria’s education and social services systems;
 - E. 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;
 - F. 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;
 - G. whereas a development-focused response to the crisis, a ‘Marshall plan for the North’ was announced in April 2014 by the Nigerian authorities;
 - H. whereas the terrorist organisation 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;
 - I. whereas Boko Haram has attacked Nigeria’s police and military, politicians, schools, religious buildings, public institutions and civilians, including both Christian and Muslim, with increasing regularity since 2009, while terrorist acts against civilians continued to escalate by 2013;
 - J. whereas in 2015 alone, Boko Haram has killed more than 3.500 civilians;
 - K. whereas the Boko Haram attacks have resulted in a massive displacement of local

population, including 1.4 million children;

- L. 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;
- M. 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);
- N. 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;
- O. 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;
- P. whereas the Nigerian Army has made remarkable progress in the fight against Boko Haram during the last months liberating many cities and freeing an important number of hostages; whereas this has led to an increase in suicide attacks by the terrorist organisation;
- Q. whereas in the framework of the anti-terrorist fight, 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;
- R. whereas following the publication of an Amnesty International report on 3 June 2015, which claimed that more than 7.000 young men and boys died in military detention camps, 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;
- S. whereas the humanitarian situation in the fighting zones remains dreadful with poor access to food, education, safe drinking water and health services; whereas many families are left without health services, such as routine immunisation, maternal and childcare; whereas humanitarian aid needs are far from being met by corresponding funds; whereas without additional financial support, hundreds of thousands of children will have no access to basic health care, safe drinking water and education;
- T. whereas child marriages and undesired pregnancies remain widespread in rural areas across Nigeria;

- U. whereas bloody clashes between members of the Shia Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) and the army killed an estimated 300 members of the group; whereas hundreds more including the IMN leader and his wife remain in custody without charges;
 - V. whereas rural banditry continues to constitute a challenge to Nigeria; whereas armed bandits continue to terrorise rural communities, rustling cattle, raping and abducting women and girls, killing people and committing highway robbery;
 - W. whereas demands for an independent state of Biafra have become persistent again in 2015, resulting in demonstrations, which turned partly violent; whereas security forces have used at times excessive force against demonstrators;
 - X. whereas President Buhari approved the cleaning up of Ogoniland as recommended by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP);
 - Y. whereas the Nigerian Senate is currently examining a bill to Prohibit Frivolous Petitions and Other Matters Connected Therewith; whereas this bill seeks to criminalize the dissemination of “abusive statements” via social media, or the publication of discrediting petition against the government or others via print or electronic media;
 - Z. whereas homosexual acts are forbidden by law, gay movements banned and support for similar organisations criminalised;
1. Welcomes the peaceful transition in power in Nigeria following the presidential elections and is encouraged by the ambitious reform programme of President Buhari and his administration;
 2. 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; is concerned that the promised investigation of allegations of grave violations and abuses of human rights by security forces including killings, torture, enforced disappearances, have not been fulfilled;
 3. Urges the Nigerian authorities to investigate, as promised by President Buhari, evidence that Nigerian military forces have committed serious human rights violations, war crimes and acts which may constitute crimes against humanity;
 4. Strongly condemns all human rights abuses by Boko Haram, 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;
 5. 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;

6. Reiterates its call for the immediate release of those who have been abducted by Boko Haram, 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;
7. 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;
8. Calls on the Nigerian Government to develop a comprehensive strategy that addresses the root causes of terrorism, 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; 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;
9. Welcomes in this context the Nigerian Army's "Operation Safe Corridor" programme designed to rehabilitate and reintegrate Boko Haram fighters into society;
10. Urges donors to increase their humanitarian assistance to refugees, internally displaced people and host communities in Nigeria and neighbouring countries and to 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;
11. 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 continue their action in order 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; welcomes the steps taken by the new administration in order to fight corruption;
12. Calls on the Nigerian authorities to take appropriate measures against child marriages;
13. Recognises and welcomes that the Nigerian media remain largely free and vibrant; regrets however that Nigeria retains outdated criminal law provisions that impede freedom of speech and expression and expresses its concerns regarding the draft bill to Prohibit Frivolous Petitions and Other Matters Connected There which risks undermining press freedom, stifle public opinion, and criminalize freedom of expression in Nigeria;
14. Calls on the Nigerian security forces to exert restraint when dealing with pro-independence demonstrations in Biafra and to guarantee the right of freedom of expression;

15. Calls on the Nigerian authorities to guarantee the right to a fair trial to the arrested members of the Shia Islamic Movement and to stop the detention of those members where no charges are put forward;
16. 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;
17. Welcomes the announced action to tackle the environmental problems in Ogoniland;
18. Calls on the Nigerian government and regional authorities to stop criminalising the Nigerian LGBTi community and to guarantee their right to freedom of expression;
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).