



Plenary sitting

B8-0484/2016

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 PPE Group

B8-0484/2016

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

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Nigeria,
- having regards to the statement by the HR/VP Catherine Ashton on Nigeria of 2 June 2013, 26 June 2013, 14 April 2014,
- having regards to the Council conclusions on Nigeria of 12 May 2014, and of 9 February 2015,
- having regards to the Statement by the EEAS Spokesperson on Nigeria of 26 June 2014, 27 July 2015, 16 December 2015,
- having regards to the statement by the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Nigeria of 26 June 2014 and 30 June 2014,
- having regard to the decisions of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), adopted at its 567th meeting held on 14 January 2015, on regional and international efforts to combat the Boko Haram terrorist group
- having regard to the appeal made by the AU Peace and Security Council, at its 571st meeting held at the level of Heads of States and Government on 29 January 2016, for AU Member States and international partners, to sustain their collective efforts towards effective combatting of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa, having regard to the 6th Nigeria-EU ministerial dialogue held on 15 March 2016 in Brussels,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- having regard to the second revision of the Cotonou Agreement 2007-2013, ratified by Nigeria on 27 September 2010,
- 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 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and in particular its provisions on the protection of freedom of religion in its 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 the Sixth African Union (AU) Annual High-Level Retreat of Special Envoys and Mediators on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa, convened in Windhoek from 21 to 22 October 2015, on the theme: “*Silencing the Guns – Terrorism, Mediation and Armed Groups*”,
- having regard to the research report *Crushed but not defeated, the impact of persistent violence on the Church in Northern Nigeria*, of February 2016 of Open Doors International,
- having regard to the Human Rights Watch World report 2015 on Nigeria,
- having regard to the European Commission humanitarian aid package of €52 million announced on 5 April 2016 aiming at educational projects for children in emergency situations in 2016, which covers, among other countries, Nigeria;
- having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - A. whereas although, Nigeria is Africa's leading oil producer with large oil revenues, it has one of the highest levels of income disparity worldwide and is facing considerable humanitarian challenges, poverty and growing inequalities;
 - B. whereas political instability, poor governance and endemic public sector corruption continues to undermine the enjoyment of social and economic rights in Nigeria; whereas Transparency International ranked Nigeria 136th out of 175 countries in its 2015 Corruption Perceptions Index;
 - C. 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 has affected about five million people, including more than 2.2 million Nigerians who are internally displaced and almost 180,000 who have fled to neighbouring countries;
 - D. whereas some 270 schoolgirls were abducted on April 14-15, 2014 from a school in northeast Chibok town by Boko Haram, and whereas majority of them are still missing; whereas Boko Haram demanded in April 2016 a nearly £40m ransom for the return of the missing Chibok girls;
 - E. whereas in May 2014 Amnesty International revealed that Nigerian security forces failed to act on advance warnings about Boko Haram’s armed raid on the state-run boarding school in Chibok - knowing four hours of advance about the attack but did not do enough to stop it;
 - F. whereas the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) was established by the Member States of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and Benin to neutralize and eliminate the Boko Haram terrorist group;

- G. whereas the African Union Commission held on 1st of February 2016 a Donors' conference in support of the Multinational Joint Task Force operations against Boko Haram terrorist group; whereas the total contributions pledged to the support of MNJTF, since its inception, and to provide humanitarian assistance as well as development support amount to \$ 250 million (USD);
- H. whereas that the rule of law, governance and democracy is one of the three key development sectors which will be supported through the 11th EDF with a sum of 90 million (17 percent of Nigeria's NIP) EUR 2014-2020; whereas European Commission should substantially increase funding for the mentioned sector in the mid-term EDF review;
- I. whereas President's Buhari actions lead to resupplying soldiers, replace the entire military's top brass, and move the command center for the fight to the heart of the Boko Haram insurgency in Maiduguri in Borno state;
- J. whereas the Nigerian military announced on April 6, 2016, that at least 800 fighters have surrendered in the last three weeks; whereas Nigerian troops have rescued 11,595 civilian hostages during raids on Boko Haram territory in the mountainous border regions between Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon since February 26;
- K. whereas United Nations human rights experts have urged the Nigerian Government on 15 February 2016 to ensure that the areas they claim to have liberated from Boko Haram forces are truly safe for the displaced persons to return;
- L. 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;
- M. whereas on 16 March 2016, at a mosque in the north-eastern Nigerian city of Maiduguri another attack carried out by two female suicide bombers took place, resulting in the death of 22 worshippers and 18 others wounded;
- N. whereas in response to the attacks President Buhari has said the government will defend Nigerians' right to worship freely;
- O. whereas from 2006-2014, between 9,000 and 11,500 Christians have been killed in Nigeria, more than a million have been affected, with many driven from their homes and whereas 13,000 churches have been destroyed or abandoned;
- P. whereas Christians living under sharia law are facing discrimination and marginalization and have limited to no access to federal rights;

- Q. whereas over 1.5 million Nigerian children, living in the eleven most northern states, suffer from acute malnutrition – representing the highest concentration in Africa,
1. Strongly condemns the recent violence and attacks on Muslim and Christian communities in Northern Nigeria and calls upon the Federal Government to protect its population and to address the root causes of the violence by ensuring equal rights to all citizens and no-discrimination legislation;
 2. Underlines that combination of structural causes and aggravating factors contributing to the proliferation of terrorism and violent extremism must be taken into account when developing counter-fighting strategies; stresses in this context that socio-economic, and political marginalisation, unequal distribution of resources, deprivation and poverty, poor governance and institutional weaknesses, including in the law and order sector, endemic corruption, the existence of largely ill-monitored and poorly-controlled borders, among others, are key underlying factors; urges AU Member States, and also the wider international community to enhance efforts and address the multi-dimensional root causes and drivers of terrorism and violent extremism, and to develop holistic response;
 3. Believes the fight against corruption must be led by the Nigerian authorities, and stresses 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; reminds that corruption also exacerbates violence and insecurity and can lead to dissatisfaction with public institutions, decreased legitimacy of the government in the eyes of the citizens, and eventually cause spirals of anger and unrest; further offers its support in this objective, and in seeking to break the link between corrupt practices and terrorism
 4. Commends efforts made by the Buhari government to reinforce its anti-corruption credentials and mandating that all government financial transactions pass through a single bank account in order to monitor spending;
 5. Calls for improving efficiency and independence of Nigeria's judiciary system as a mean of effective use of criminal justice to combat terrorism and corruption;
 6. 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;
 7. Notes with concern that attacks on schools in northern Nigeria deny children educational opportunities and risks fuelling the radicalisation on which terrorist groups like Boko Haram depend;

8. Supports the Buhari government in their efforts to fight terrorism and Boko Haram, as well as to reintegrate former militants into society;
9. Welcomes the EU and its Member States support to Nigeria in its on-going efforts to protect its citizens and defeat terrorism in all its forms and in full respect of human rights;
10. Reminds, however, that Government's actions undertaken against Boko Haram should not lead to further fuelling of the violence; calls in this respect for a reform of the Nigerian state security forces, including police, and conducting investigations against those who are responsible for any human rights violations including extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrests, and extortion-related abuses;
11. Underlines the importance of regional cooperation for addressing the threat posed by Boko Haram; Welcomes the establishment of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) by the Member States of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and Benin, to neutralize and eliminate the Boko Haram terrorist group;
12. Recognises that Nigeria has the potential to be the economic and political powerhouse of Africa but that its development has been held back by poor economic governance, weak democratic institutions and massive inequality; emphasizes the importance of prioritizing the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16 of the Agenda 2030 which seeks to substantially reduce corruption, as well as to promote access to justice and effective, accountable and transparent institutions;
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the EU Council and Commission, the 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).