



Plenary sitting

B8-0603/2016

10.5.2016

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 Djibouti
(2016/2694(RSP))

Nedzhmi Ali, Petras Auštrevičius, Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Dita Charanzová, Gérard Deprez, Martina Dlabajová, Nathalie Griesbeck, Antanas Guoga, Marian Harkin, Filiz Hyusmenova, Ivan Jakovčić, Petr Ježek, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Valentinas Mazuronis, Javier Nart, Urmas Paet, Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruiz, Carolina Punset, Jozo Radoš, Frédérique Ries, Marietje Schaake, Jasenko Selimovic, Hannu Takkula, Pavel Telička, Ramon Tremosa i Balcells, Ivo Vajgl, Johannes Cornelis van Baalen, Hilde Vautmans, Paavo Väyrynen
on behalf of the ALDE Group

**European Parliament resolution on Djibouti
(2016/2694(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its earlier resolutions on Djibouti of 18 December 1997 on the human rights situation in Djibouti, of 15 January 2009 on the situation in the Horn of Africa, and of 4 July 2013 on the situation in Djibouti,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the African Charter Of Human and Peoples' Rights which Djibouti has ratified,
 - having regard to the Cotonou Agreement signed on 23 June 2000 and revised on 22 June 2010,
 - having regard to the statements by the Spokesperson of the EEAS on the political situation in Djibouti on 23 December 2015 and on 12 April 2016 on the presidential elections in Djibouti,
 - having regard to the Declaration by the High Representative, Federica Mogherini, on behalf of the EU on the occasion of the World Press Freedom Day 3 May 2016,
 - having regard to the Preliminary statement of the IGAD Electoral Observation Mission on 9 April 2016,
 - having regard to the EU regional political partnership for peace, security and development in the Horn of Africa
 - having regard to the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Djibouti which recognises fundamental liberties and basic principles of good governance,
 - having regard to Rule ... of procedure,
- A. whereas Ismail Omar Guelleh, who came to power in 1999, was re-elected in 2005 with 96% of the vote and announced that he would not stand again for election in 2016; whereas he won with close to 80% of the vote in April 2011 in elections that were boycotted by a large section of the opposition after the Djibouti Parliament had amended the constitution in 2010 to remove the two-term limit to allow President Ismail Omar Guelleh to seek a new term;
- B. whereas there was violence after the 2013 parliamentary elections which the opposition claimed were rigged; whereas there were arrestation of religious, close to radicalized movements "Frères Musulmans" who called for insurrection; whereas the government launched a crackdown on its opponents; whereas it later signed an agreement in 2014 to restore peace with the opposition, in which

it recognizes the status of the opposition and the entrance to Parliament opposition 'MEPs; whereas the Djibouti Human Rights League said 29 people were killed when police fired at an unrelated religious demonstration on 23 December 2015;

- C. whereas Ismail Omar Guelleh won a fourth five-year term as Djibouti's President with 87% of the vote in 8 April 2016; whereas the Observation Missions of the African Union, the League of Arab State for that presidential election reported that the poll was inclusive, free and transparent enough to be considered a credible reflection of the will of the people of Djibouti; whereas the Observation Missions of the IGAD and OCI reported that the presidential election was conducted in a peaceful, orderly and transparent way;
- D. whereas an opposition coalition called the Union of National Salvation (USN) made of 7 parties whose 4 legal parties recognised by the government has witnessed many splits in its ranks and ethnic allegiances threaten its unity, 3 of the 7 parties have decided to boycott the polls; whereas those opposition parties who participated has des cribbed the election as a "sham", they complain of police brutality against them and say they don't get fair media coverage;
- E. whereas the opposition daily newsletter has been closed by a Court order since 19 January 2016; whereas the Djibouti authorities have been quick to silence the opposition; whereas Kadar Abdi Ibrahim, co-director of the newspaper opposition "L'Aurore" has been arrested the 14 January 2016 and was sentenced to two months suspended prison; whereas, the journalist, Mohamed Ibrahim Waiss, has been arrested the 8 August 2014 during a pacific demonstration, tortured in prison then released on 21 August 2014 whereas a party of BBC journalists, who had previously obtained accreditation, were arrested on 1 April 2016 and subsequently detained for 18 hours and interrogated for eight hours before spending the night in custody; whereas this party was expelled from the country without having obtained legal representation; whereas in this last case, the Djibouti's authorities officially apologised to the United Kingdom and the BBC in April 2016;
- F. whereas Djibouti is ranked 170th out of 180 countries in the world ranking of press freedom established by RSF in 2015;
- G. whereas, the country has hosted France's largest military base on the continent since its independence in 1977; whereas Djibouti's proximity to restive regions in Africa and the Middle East renders the country strategically significant for the location of bases for the military superpowers in the horn of Africa (including the only US permanent military base in Africa); whereas Djibouti has hosted an Italian military base; whereas China has planned to establish a base in Djibouti at the end of 2017; whereas Djibouti also hosts German ships and Japanese military planes;
- H. whereas Djibouti has played and continues to play a key role in combating piracy and terrorism in the region; whereas American drones depart from the country to target Al Shabab in Somalia and Islamists in Yemen and across the Middle East ;

- I. whereas these bases, along with the port of Djibouti at the centre of a major shipping route, are the main sources of income for the country; whereas the wealth gap between the ruling elites and the majority of the population is widening on a daily bases; whereas all NGOs present in the country (Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Reporters without Borders) ranked Djibouti among the poorest countries in the world (with the majority of the population having no access to water, food or sanitation);
- J. whereas Djibouti as the other countries of the Horn of Africa, are faced with many problems, consisting of complex emergency humanitarian situations, that are characterized by almost continuous cycles of food insecurity, drought and desertification, Whereas Djibouti has few natural resources and arable land; Whereas EU finances a program in the field of clean water; whereas the President Ismail Omar Guelleh has implemented since 2007, a national solidarity fund to finance the priority programs in the social field;
- K. whereas Djibouti is a signatory of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- L. whereas Djiboutian women are confronted with diverse forms of violence, including rape, female genital mutilation, domestic violence, sexual harassment and early marriage, all of which have far reaching negative consequences for the physical and psychological well-being of women;
- M. whereas respect of for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law are the very foundation of the ACP-EU partnership and constitute essential elements of the Cotonou Agreement;
 1. calls on the Djiboutian authorities to guarantee respect for human rights recognised in national and international agreements, rights that Djibouti has signed up to with a view to safeguarding civil and political rights and freedoms, including the right to demonstrate peacefully and freedom of the press;
 2. calls on all political forces in Djibouti to respect the rule of law and not to engage in any kind of violence and repressive measures following the results of the poll; calls on the Djiboutian authorities to pick up the thread of political dialogue with the opposition parties to address all political, economic and social issues in order to ensure stability, which is something that necessarily entails respect for human rights and good governance;
 3. points out that if Djibouti's geo-strategic position on the Gulf of Aden renders the country a valuable partner in the fight against terrorism and piracy, welcomes the government for its efforts in the fight against terrorism, and piracy, contributing to the stability in the region. Recalls its participation in AMISON. Recalls its contribution in the context of EUCAP NESTOE and ATALANTE operations;
 4. recalls that the EP has stated its willingness to monitor the situation in Djibouti closely with regard to the Cotonou Agreement (and in particular Articles 8 and 9 thereof;

5. urges the EU, its Member States to appeal to the government of Djibouti to respect the rule of law, including the freedom of speech, the freedom of association and the freedom of assembly, to refrain the use of force and comply with its own constitution;
6. Welcomes the provisions of the penal code which punish any indignity against women; strongly condemns any act of sexual violence against women and requests the Government to fight against impunity is the basis of democratic life and bring those responsible for sexual violence against women to justice;
7. instructs the EP President to forward this resolution to the Government of Djibouti, the institutions of the African Union, the IGAD, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly.