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*Plenary sitting*

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**B8-0398/2017**

7.6.2017

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 123(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo  
(2017/2703(RSP))

**Hilde Vautmans, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Javier Nart, Marietje Schaake,  
Jasenko Selimovic, Ivo Vajgl**  
on behalf of the ALDE Group

**B8-0398/2017**

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (2017/2703(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC),
- having regard to the statements by the EU Delegation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the situation of human rights in the country,
- having regard to the political agreements reached in the DRC on 18 October 2016 and 31 December 2016,
- having regard to the UN Security Council resolutions on the DRC, in particular resolutions 2293 (2016) on renewing the DRC sanctions regime and the mandate of the Group of Experts, and 2277 (2016) on renewing the mandate of the UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO),
- having regard to the UN Security Council press statements of 15 July 2016, 21 September 2016 and 24 February 2017 on the situation in the DRC, and the press statement of 29 March 2017 on the deaths of two members of the Group of Experts on DRC,
- having regard to the Council of the EU conclusions of 6 March 2017 on the DRC,
- having regard to the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2015, adopted by the Council of the European Union on 20 June 2016,
- having regard to the joint statement on the Democratic Republic of Congo by the African Union, the United Nations, the European Union and the International Organisation of La Francophonie on 16 February 2017,
- having regard to the joint statement of the co-presidents of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly of the ACP-EU on 27 January 2017,
- having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of June 1981,
- having regard to the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance,
- having regard to the African Union's Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa (2002),
- having regard to the UN International Charter of Human Rights,
- having regard to the Cotonou Agreement,
- having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. whereas the Democratic Republic of Congo endured much bloodshed and brutal political repression in the lead-up to the 19 December 2016 deadline that marked the end of President Joseph Kabila's constitutionally mandated two-term limit;
- B. whereas a church-brokered agreement was reached on 31 December 2016 on peaceful political transition between the government and the opposition; whereas the deal envisaged the political transition to end with presidential elections to be held at the end of 2017 by a transitional government; whereas the agreement laid the groundwork for a National Transition Council charged with carrying out the agreement;
- C. whereas the death on 1 February 2017 of the opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, who was to have headed the National Transition Council, led to a feud of succession between opposition leaders and a quarrel with the government over who should succeed Mr Tshisekedi as leader of the opposition coalition known as the 'Rassemblement'; whereas Mr Tshisekedi's body remains in a morgue in Brussels owing to a protracted dispute between his family, his party and the Congolese authorities over where to bury him;
- D. whereas progress in implementing the agreement has stalled and petty squabbling has multiplied; whereas, as a result of this and of the lack of a sincere political will to reach an agreement, the Catholic bishops attempting to find a government-opposition power-sharing arrangement ended their mission on 27 March 2017; whereas President Joseph Kabila took this an opportunity to play a game favourable to himself, reshuffling his government on 16 April 2017 in what could be seen as an attempt to appease the opposition;
- E. whereas, under the 31 December 2016 agreement, President Joseph Kabila was to remain in office pending elections by the end of 2017; whereas there was a need to update and verify the electoral roll before the elections; whereas a team of seven experts appointed by the International Organisation of the Francophonie (OIF) has, at the request of the Congolese Electoral Board, carried out a mission to evaluate voter registration in Kinshasa, Goma and five other electoral districts in Kongo-Central; whereas the OIF team stated that the registration process began well but that there is an urgent need to widen it to cover the whole Congolese territory, the security challenges notwithstanding, and to publish an electoral calendar;
- F. whereas the political standstill has been feeding into already growing unrest throughout the country, with violent conflicts at provincial level in Ituri and in North and South Kivu; whereas further clashes have been reported in Tanganyika, at the border with South Sudan and in Kongo-Central; whereas rape and other forms of sexual violence are used as weapons of war by all parties involved in the long-standing conflict, in particular in the eastern province of Kivu;
- G. whereas hundreds have been killed in clashes between militia and government forces in the Kasai region since August 2016, with the crisis reaching a very worrying level with the killing of the customary chief Kamwina Nsapu; whereas, according to the UN, the deadly violence in Kasai has forced more than a million people to leave their homes in the past eight months, leaving 400 000 children at risk of dying from hunger and 400 people dead since September 2016; whereas the United Nations have documented 40 mass graves in Kasai since August 2016; whereas 165 Congolese civil society and

human rights organisations have called for an independent international investigation into the massive violations of human rights in the provinces of Kasai and Lomami, stating that both governmental forces and militiamen are implicated in these crimes;

- H. whereas two United Nations experts investigating rapes, massacres and exploitation of natural resources, Ms Zaida Catalan and Mr Michael Sharp, were shot dead by a group of men in March 2017 in the restive Kasai region; whereas Congolese authorities said on 21 May 2017 that they had completed investigation of the killing of the two experts and that two suspects in the case would soon face trial; whereas a meeting was convened on 23 May 2017 to update the United Nations Security Council on the investigations into the deaths; whereas Ms Catalan has left more than 100 files in a folder on her computer, including files containing evidence that at least one government official may be involved in the militia violence;
- I. whereas on 12 December 2016 the European Union adopted sanctions imposing travel bans and asset freezes against seven Congolese individuals, and on 29 May 2017, to address the deteriorating situation in the country, extended these sanctions against nine other senior security officials;
- J. whereas according to the global report of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), as quoted by the Norwegian Refugee Council on 22 May 2017, the DRC has world's highest number of internal refugees fleeing conflict, with over 922 000 people forced to abandon their homes in 2016; whereas 2.2 million people are internally displaced and over 550 000 have fled the country, and whereas an estimated 7.3 million people are in need of humanitarian aid;
- K. whereas UNICEF reported on 30 May 2017 that more than 9 000 children received at two temporary reception centres in Dundo (a town in northern Angola), having fled the DRC, need urgent support, adding that, to date, more than 25 000 refugees have reached in Angola, having fled the violence in the DRC's Kasai provinces; whereas the supply of food to towns such as Kananga, Tshikapa, Luebo, Mbuji Mayi, Muene, Ditu and Luiza has become particularly difficult, with the population starving and the social order disrupted;
- L. whereas, in addition to political instability, the Congolese economy is reeling from a rapid currency depreciation and a low foreign reserve because of weak mineral prices, with inflation skyrocketing from less than 2 % in 2015 to more than 25 % in 2016; whereas the DRC is in the lowest tenth percentile of the least developed countries in the world, and ranks in 176th place among the 188 countries listed on the world Human Development Index, as reported by the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP);
  - 1. Condemns with utmost severity the assassination of chief Kamwina Nsapu, the originating leader of the popular uprising in Grand Kasai; takes note of the release of Kamwina Nsapu's mortal remains, allowing him to be buried as the customary chief he was in accordance with ancestral rites and customs; demands that the DRC Government allows the repatriation of the body of the late Etienne Tshisekedi so that he may be buried in his native country;
  - 2. Expresses its deep concern over the mass graves discovered in the Grand Kasai region

and the resurgence of violence in the northern and eastern parts of the DRC; firmly condemns all acts of violence and human rights abuses in the country, regardless of the perpetrator; calls on the Congolese authorities, in light of the involvement of governmental forces in these events, to facilitate without delay the launch of an independent international investigation; stresses that sexual violence will not end until the perpetrators, including the leaders bearing command responsibility, are brought to justice;

3. Reaffirms its strong support of the political agreement of 31 December 2016, and its call for peaceful, credible, free, fair and inclusive elections by December 2017, leading to a democratic transfer of power; calls on all Congolese parties to return to a more positive and fruitful mind-set, and to maintain the political goodwill that led to the signing of the agreement, thereby avoiding further insecurity in the DRC;
4. Requires the DRC Government to fully implement confidence-building measures; recalls that security concerns should not delay the active preparation, in good faith, of the elections, offering, as they do, the unique and best way to ensure lasting peace and security in the DRC;
5. Reiterates its commitment to support the implementation of the agreement, in close cooperation with the African Union and regional mechanisms, and its determination to continue to closely follow the situation in the DRC, in particular as regards respect for human rights, the security conditions on the ground and the efforts to successfully conclude a credible electoral process;
6. Calls for further urgent measures to be taken to fix the electoral calendar and provide a realistic and consensual budget so that the elections can be held before the end of 2017; underlines, in this regard, the responsibility of the Independent National Electoral Commission and the crucial role it must play in the implementation of a credible and democratic electoral process;
7. Expresses serious concern over the serious violations of international humanitarian law committed by local militia, including the unlawful recruitment and use of child soldiers, as well as the killing of civilians by members of the DRC security forces, all of which may constitute war crimes under international law;
8. Condemns in the strongest terms the killing of the two UN experts working to promote peace and security in the country; expresses its heartfelt condolences to their families; demands that a full light be shed on this serious crime, and calls on the Congolese authorities to work in close cooperation with the UN in subsequent investigations; fully supports the UN Group of Experts, whose members are carrying out essential work in the DRC;
9. Welcomes the sanctions adopted by the European Union on 12 December 2016 against seven Congolese individuals, and on 29 May 2017 against a further nine Congolese officials, imposing travel bans and asset freezes; greets the decision of the USA to place General François Olenga, head of President Kabila's military board, on a list of 'specially designated nationals', freezing any assets he has in the USA and barring US citizens from engaging in financial transactions with him; calls for further investigations of, and sanctions to be extended against, the persons responsible, at the highest level of

government, for the violence and crimes committed in the DRC and for the plunder of its natural resources, in conformity with the investigations carried out by the UN Group of Experts; stresses that the sanctions must include asset freezes and the prohibition of entering the EU;

10. Reiterates its full support to MONUSCO and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo; regrets the passive actions of the 17 000-strong MONUSCO force, the most important UN mission in terms of forces and budget, and which – with the exception of the 3000-strong Intervention Brigade – offers no effective protection to the population; welcomes UN Security Council resolution 2348(2017) extending the mandate of MONUSCO until 31 March 2018; stresses that the original and current mandate, which applies to all UN troops in the country, is to ‘neutralize armed groups’; requires the entire MONUSCO force to fully intervene and protect the population from the armed groups, to protect women from rape and other sexual violence, and not to allow any limitations on the basis of national command;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the African Union, the President, Prime Minister and Parliament of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the UN Human Rights Council and the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly.