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Plenary sitting

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<TitreType>MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION</TitreType>

<TitreSuite>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</TitreSuite>

<TitreRecueil>pursuant to Rule 123(2) of the Rules of Procedure</TitreRecueil>

<Titre>on the situation in Yemen</Titre>

<DocRef>(2017/2849(RSP))</DocRef>

<RepeatBlock-By><Depute>Barbara Lochbihler, Ernest Urtasun, Igor Šoltes, Bodil Valero, Michel Reimon, Yannick Jadot, Molly Scott Cato, Alyn Smith</Depute>

<Commission>{Verts/ALE}on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group</Commission>

</RepeatBlock-By>

B8‑0654/2017

European Parliament resolution on the situation in Yemen

(2017/2849(RSP))

*The European Parliament*,

– having regard to the High-level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen, which took place in Geneva on 25 April 2017, and to the EU’s additional pledge of EUR 116 million,

– having regard to the appeal by the UN Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures, Idriss Jazairy, of 12 April 2017 to lift the naval blockade on Yemen,

– having regard to its previous resolutions on Yemen, in particular those of 25 February 2016 on the humanitarian situation in Yemen[[1]](#footnote-1) and of 9 July 2015 on the situation in Yemen[[2]](#footnote-2),

– having regard to its resolution of 28 April 2016 on attacks on hospitals and schools as violations of international humanitarian law[[3]](#footnote-3) and its resolution of 27 February 2014 on the use of armed drones[[4]](#footnote-4),

– having regard to the Council conclusions of 3 April 2017 on Yemen, the joint statement of 10 January 2016 by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR), Federica Mogherini, and the Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides, on the attack on a Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders – MSF) health centre in Yemen, and the statement of Commissioner Stylianides of 11 November 2017 on the humanitarian situation in Yemen,

– having regard to the statement of 15 December 2015 by the European External Action Service (EEAS) spokesperson on the resumption of UN-facilitated talks on Yemen, and to the joint statement of 2 October 2015 by the VP/HR, Federica Mogherini, and the Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides, on Yemen,

– having regard to the EU Guidelines on promoting compliance with international humanitarian law,

– having regard to the UN Security Council resolutions on Yemen, in particular resolutions 2216 (2015), 2201 (2015) and 2140 (2014),

– having regard to the statements of 8 and 10 January 2016 on Yemen, by the spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General,

– having regard to the recommendations on ‘Rethinking Yemen’s Economy’ of the first Development Champions Forum, held from 29 April to 1 May 2017,

– having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas since the Saudi-led coalition, including the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, Jordan and others, and backed by the United States and the United Kingdom, started bombarding Yemen in March 2015, the country has been descending ever deeper into armed conflict, with dramatic consequences for the civilian population, which has already been suffering for many years from insecurity and political tensions, high levels of poverty, dramatic environmental devastation and economic paralysis;

B. whereas the conflict is increasingly entrenched between Houthi rebels allied with former president Ali Abdullah Saleh (who control the part of the country where an estimated 70 % of the population live, including the capital, Sana’a) and who are allegedly receiving support from Iran, and, on the other side, forces loyal to the ousted but internationally recognised president Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, supported by the Saudi-led coalition;

C. whereas tensions have further escalated since the Houthis managed for the first time, on 4 November 2017, to target a long-range missile at Riyadh’s airport, which was intercepted by Saudi air defence before causing any damage but brought the Saudi capital into the range of possible attacks; whereas Saudi Arabia accused Iran of providing the Houthi authorities with the missile capacity, and in retaliation closed all access routes to Yemen by land, sea and air;

D. whereas imports account for almost 90 % of the country’s staple foods; whereas the UN Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures has already stressed in the past that the aerial and naval blockade imposed on Yemen by the coalition forces has been one of the main causes of the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe; whereas this blockade has restricted and disrupted the import and export of food, fuel and medical supplies, as well as humanitarian aid; whereas the unreasonable delay and/or denial of entry to vessels to Yemeni ports amounts to an unlawful unilateral coercive measure (UCM) under international law;

E. whereas in February 2017 the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) declared Yemen the ‘largest food security emergency in the world’; whereas humanitarian organisations estimate that of the 27 million people living in Yemen, almost 70 % are in need of humanitarian assistance (80 % of all children), while more than 17 million people are food insecure and 7 million of these at acute risk of famine; whereas according to a UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) statement of 2 November 2017 on Yemen, the ‘fastest growing cholera epidemic ever recorded brings the number of cases to 895 000’;

F. whereas humanitarian organisations have stressed that Saudi Arabia’s reported reopening of certain ports and entry points in areas under the control of the internationally recognised government will not solve the acute fuel and food shortages faced by the vast majority of the population who live in the rebel-held territory; whereas the fuel shortage is preventing hospitals from functioning;

G. whereas despite the High-level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen, held in Geneva in April 2017 – during which various countries and organisations made pledges amounting to USD 1.1 billion – as of 21 November 2017, donors had delivered funds amounting to only 56.9 % of the UN’s USD 2.3 billion humanitarian appeal for Yemen for 2017;

H. whereas according to the UN more than 90 % of the victims of the crisis have been civilian casualties, the number of which since 2015 goes into the tens of thousands; whereas the Saudi-led alliance stands accused of committing war crimes after unlawfully attacking schools, markets, hospitals, weddings, a funeral and homes in indiscriminate attacks and attacks on civilian targets over the past few years; whereas the Houthi-Saleh alliance has indiscriminately shelled civilian areas in Ta’iz city and fired artillery indiscriminately across the border into Saudi Arabia, killing and injuring civilians, and has recruited boys as young as 15 to fight as child soldiers on the front line;

I. whereas in spite of the international pressure for a political solution to the crisis, the parties to the conflict have failed to reach a settlement;

J. whereas, according to the 18th EU Annual Report on Arms Exports, 16 EU Member States, among them France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Spain, with multibillion-euro exports, have been providing weapons and military support to members of the Saudi-led coalition, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates; whereas President Trump on his recent visit added fuel to the fire by expressing unreserved support for Saudi Arabia’s politics in the region and promised weapons exports worth USD 110 billion to the country; whereas since the beginning of his tenure, there has been a dramatic increase in extraterritorial and extrajudicial lethal US operations in Yemen, notably with drones, which have reportedly resulted in numerous civilian casualties; whereas there is evidence that EU Member States provide direct or indirect support to such lethal operations through intelligence and other means; whereas arms exports and military support are enabling the blockade and ongoing air campaign, and are contributing to the humanitarian crisis and continued failure to find a political resolution to the conflict;

K. whereas Parliament’s resolution of 25 February 2016 on the humanitarian situation in Yemen called on the VP/HR to launch an initiative to impose an EU arms embargo on Saudi Arabia, in line with Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP of 8 December 2008; whereas in October 2017, four European Parliament political group leaders wrote to the VP/HR urging her to act on Parliament’s repeated call for an EU arms embargo over Yemen;

1. Expresses grave concern at the alarming deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Yemen; deeply regrets the loss of life caused by the conflict and the extreme suffering of those deprived of humanitarian aid and vital commodities caught up in the fighting being displaced or losing their livelihoods, and expresses its condolences to the families of the victims; reaffirms its commitment to continuing to support Yemen and the Yemeni people;

2. Calls on the Saudi-led alliance to immediately and fully halt the naval and air blockade against Yemen and notably to reopen the Hodeida and Saleef ports and Sana’a international airport in order to allow humanitarian aid, water and fuel deliveries to reach the starving population; equally calls on the Houthi-Saleh alliance to grant unhindered access for aid and humanitarian workers;

3. Strongly condemns the indiscriminate attacks against civilians, including bombardments, shelling, use of cluster munitions and reported use of antipersonnel mines, and attacks causing the destruction of civilian infrastructure, including schools, medical facilities, residential areas, markets, water systems, ports and airports; renews its urgent call on all parties to the conflict to ensure the protection of civilians and to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law;

4. Urgently calls on all parties to agree to a cessation of hostilities to be monitored by the UN as a first step towards the resumption of peace talks under the auspices of the UN, considering that only an urgently needed ceasefire can alter the dramatic suffering of the civilian population;

5. Reminds all parties involved that the continued chaos and instability created by the conflict strengthens extremist groups such as AQAP and ISIS/Daesh; affirms the EU’s commitment to opposing extremist groups and their ideologies and stresses the need for parties in the region to do the same;

6. Reiterates its call on the VP/HR to launch an initiative for an EU arms embargo against members of the Saudi-led coalition, given the serious breaches of international humanitarian and human rights law it has committed in Yemen and the fact that the continued licensing of weapons transfers to these countries would therefore be in breach of Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP of 8 December 2008, of EU Member States’ national legislation and of the Arms Trade Treaty; requests that the VP/HR report on which measures have been taken to implement the previous call as expressed in Parliament’s resolution of 25 February 2016;

7. Deeply regrets President Trump’s announcement of greatly increased weapons exports to Saudi Arabia and underlines that arms exporters that fuel the conflict in Yemen risk complicity in war crimes; deplores the dramatic increase in US lethal counter-terror operations in Yemen; urges the Council, the VP/HR and the Member States to oppose extrajudicial killings, reaffirm the EU’s position under international law and ensure that Member States do not perpetrate, facilitate or otherwise take part in unlawful lethal operations; urges the VP/HR, the Member States and third countries to commit to conducting investigations, in line with their international law obligations, into credible allegations of potentially unlawful deaths and to adopting the Common Position on the Use of Armed Drones Outside of Armed Conflict;

8. Fully supports efforts by EU Member States and third countries to establish international mechanisms to gather evidence and to hold those responsible for grave human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law to account; stresses that ensuring accountability for violations is indispensable to achieving a long-term settlement of the conflict; welcomes, in this regard, the setting up of a UN Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts with the mandate to monitor and report on the human rights situation in Yemen and carry out a comprehensive examination of all alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law and other appropriate and applicable fields of international law committed by all parties to the conflict since March 2015;

9. Calls on all parties to the conflict to work to remove all logistical and financial obstacles affecting the import and distribution of food and medical supplies to civilians in need;

10. Calls on all parties, notably on the Houthi authorities, to allow unhindered access for journalists to all parts of Yemen, welcomes the recent release of Yahya Abdulraqeeb al-Jubeihi, Abed al-Mahziri and Kamel al-Khozani and urges the immediate and unconditional release of all remaining imprisoned journalists;

11. Recalls that there can be no military solution to the conflict in Yemen and that the crisis can only be solved through a negotiation process, involving all the parties concerned, with the full and meaningful participation of women, young people and other marginalised groups, and leading to an inclusive political solution; reiterates its support for the efforts of the EEAS to facilitate a resumption of negotiations and urges all parties to the conflict to engage with these efforts in a constructive manner and without preconditions; calls for the EU and the Member States to publicly and strongly condemn the blockade and its impact and hold all conflict parties to account for their behaviour;

12. Calls on countries and organisations that made pledges at the High-level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen in Geneva in April 2017 to honour these pledges without delay and to increase their commitment to cover the total needs presented by the UN;

13. Calls for the EU and its Member States, alongside their humanitarian and political efforts, to support peacebuilding and resilience actions, including by supporting civil society actors and local economic and governance structures, in order to ensure the rapid restoration of basic services and infrastructure, stimulate the local economy and promote peace and social cohesion;

14. 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 governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and the Government of Yemen.

1. Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2016)0066. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. OJ C 265, 11.8.2017, p. 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2016)0201. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. OJ C 285, 29.8.2017, p. 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)