



Plenary sitting

B8-0053/2018

16.1.2018

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
(2018/2513(RSP))

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on behalf of the ALDE Group

**European Parliament resolution on Nigeria
(2018/2513(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Nigeria,
- having regard to the Statement by the Spokesman of the Secretary-General of the UN on Nigeria 21 November 2017,
- having regard to the previous statements of the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) on the situation in Nigeria,
- having regard to the statement delivered by Muhammadu Buhari, president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria at the general debate of the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly, in New York, Tuesday, 19 September 2017
- having regard to President Muhammadu Buhari’s address to the European Parliament of 3 February 2016,
- having regard to the Council conclusions on the situation in Nigeria, including those of 9 February 2015,
- having regard to the previous statements of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the situation in Nigeria,
- having regard to the previous statements of the United Nations Security Council on the situation in Nigeria,
- having regard to the second revision of the Cotonou Agreement 2007-2013, ratified by Nigeria on 27 September 2010,
- having regard to the Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- 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 African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights of 1981, ratified by Nigeria on 22 June 1983,
- having regard to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in particular its provisions on the protection of freedom of religion in 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 Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in November 2017 that in north-eastern Nigeria 8.5 million people were in need of life-saving assistance and 6.9 people were targeted for life-saving assistance throughout 2017;
- B. whereas at least 83 people have been killed in an outburst of violence between Muslim cattle herders and Christian farmers since 31 December 2017; whereas President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria blamed on the clamour for land as the main reason for these clashes between Muslim cattle herders and Christian farmers, calling for calm and ordering police presence in Benue, where most of these clashes occurred;
- C. whereas section 41(1) of the Nigerian Constitution, guarantees free movement of persons and goods; whereas there is an emerging conflict between the constitutional principle where laws emerging in some States restrict movement;
- D. whereas Muslim herdsmen are mostly from the Fulani ethnic group, who often clash over the use of land in parts of central Nigeria, known as the Middle Belt, with Christian farmers who have owned this land since the British colonisation; whereas the Middle Belt region is a diverse one, with differing religious, ancient cultural differences between its peoples;
- E. whereas the UN estimates that Nigeria, Africa’s most populous country, is set to become the nation with the world’s third largest population, just behind China and India, by 2050, a major demographic change that is also part of the origin of these clashes;
- F. whereas Nigeria is comprised of 400 different ethnic groups, with their specific language, social traditions and beliefs, with a State divided into two geographical zones, the northern savannah area and the southern forest area, separated by the Niger and Benue rivers; whereas the northern state of Nigeria is dominated by three ethnic groups, the Kanuri are found in the north-eastern corner around Lake Chad; whereas the Hausa, a dominant group north of the Niger river, is found west of the Kanuri; whereas the Fulani are scattered throughout all of northern Nigeria; whereas the Kanuri, the Hausa and the Fulani are of Islamic faith;
- G. whereas conflicts often have localised dynamics, but primarily involve increased southward movement of Fulani pastoralists and local farming communities particularly in the Middle Belt – notably in Plateau, Kaduna, Niger, Nassarawa, Benue, Taraba, and Adamawa States;
- H. Whereas over the long term pastoralism is under treat due to high population growth rate, expansion of farming and loss of pasture and cattle routes; whereas at the same time, pastoralism cannot end or be prohibited, as there are strong cultural and political economy reasons for its existence;
- I. whereas in June 2017, Fulani pastoralists were allegedly subjected to the most intense ethnic cleansing by a group of Mambila tribal militia over a period of three days

leading to killing of more than 700 Fulani pastoralists and about 300 missing in Sardauna local government of Taraba state government; whereas in November 2017, the negligence by the various levels of Governments to the ethnic cleansing has emboldened another tribal militia called Bachama tribal militia to engage in ethnic cleansing of Fulani pastoralists in neighbouring Adamawa State of Nigeria, the Bachama tribal militia reportedly engaged in unprovoked massacre of more than 50 Fulani pastoral children and women when their men went out for cattle grazing;

- J. whereas colonisation in Nigerian territory started with the establishment in 1886 of the Royal Niger Company, followed by the protectorate of Nigeria settled in 1901, and finally turned into a colony of the British Empire in 1914, a rule that lasted until 1960; whereas during British rule Christian missionaries tended to spread Christianity among those peoples still under slave-based economies, mostly in southern Nigeria around Lagos, which presents less geographical difficulties such as the forests and the non-navigable rivers of the northern regions;
- K. whereas Christianity was also spread by freed slaves from other British colonies, after slavery was abolished in the British Empire; whereas freed slaves returned to Africa, settling in Sierra Leone in order to disseminate the Christian faith throughout Western Africa, creating parishes and pastorates also in current southern Nigeria;
- L. whereas there has been a religious rivalry in the predominantly Christian Kaduna state and their Hausa and Fulani Muslim counterparts, a rivalry that can be dated back to pre-colonial political structures of Hausa land and the subsequent politics of colonialism; whereas the differences over religion, politics and resource distribution have fuelled conflict;
- M. whereas inter-religious conflicts have led also to the appearance of Boko Haram, which follows the track of previous violent fundamentalist terrorist groups, and has emerged to become a branch of Daesh; whereas Boko Haram has targeted indiscriminately churches and mosques alike, as well as private property, women and children, in Nigeria as well as in Chad, Cameroon and Niger;
- N. whereas more than six out of 10 Nigerians live on less than USD 2 a day; whereas this extreme poverty is even more acute in the northern states, which are the least developed in the country; whereas this poverty contributes directly to a social divide, religious hostility and regional division; whereas Nigeria's Gini index has dramatically increased and reached 48.8 in 2010;
- O. whereas on July 27, 2017 the Nigerian Senate voted to amend some key elements of the country's 1999 constitution, amidst growing complaints by some citizens that the document has become increasingly unworkable;
- P. whereas the European Commission announced in June 2017 a support package of €143 million for the early recovery and reconstruction needs in Borno State in Nigeria, which suffered from a worsening humanitarian crisis; whereas this support package combines short term EU humanitarian aid with long term development support to help those in the affected area, which has been devastated by the terror campaign of Boko Haram, bringing a total EU support for the crisis in Nigeria's Borno state to €224.5

million for 2017, following earlier announcements of €81.5 million in humanitarian aid;

- Q. whereas EU support is aimed at providing immediate humanitarian assistance for the most vulnerable populations affected by the emergency situation, as well as for early recovery and restoration of basic services such as health, nutrition, education, water access, sanitation and hygiene, solar power, in areas of return or resettlement; whereas EU support is also aimed to provide social protection, stimulate employment and livelihood opportunities, with a special focus on women, young people and vulnerable households, also by strengthening public administration and financial management systems in the Borno State;
1. Strongly condemns the use of violence and terror tactics by any group against another, especially if these deeds are based on religion;
 2. Expresses its concern in respect of inter-ethnic conflicts between cattle herders and farmers in the Middle Belt region;
 3. Recalls that Nigeria's President Buhari was elected in 2015 on the promise of defeating violent extremism undertaken by Boko Haram and other terror groups; urges the President to implement his campaign promises to make respect for human rights and humanitarian law a central pillar of Nigerian military operations, addressing the growing problem of malnutrition, and fighting corruption;
 4. Condemns the recent surge of violence in Nigeria, including both communal killings occurring between Muslim Fulani cattle herders and Christian farmers and terrorist attacks made by Boko Haram;
 5. Shows great concern over inter-ethnic conflicts between cattle herders and farmers in the Middle-Belt area and disputes over land and grazing rights which have caused thousands to be killed in the region since 2014;
 6. Urges the Nigerian Government to negotiate a national policy framework that would protect the interests of both farmers and herders and international partners to increase investment in preventing and resolving intercommunal conflicts between cattle pastoralists and farmers by supporting cooperation through shared economic and natural resource management initiatives;
 7. Urges the current Nigerian government to focus on upholding human rights dignity in all policies to ensure peaceful coexistence amongst citizens irrespective of their religion, believe and political affiliations ; reminds Nigerian authorities that human rights and humanitarian law must be ensured for all parties during and after military operations; is discouraged by the stalling of progress in the fight against Boko Haram and the increased occurrence and severity of suicide attacks and direct attacks against military positions;
 8. Considers any form used to exterminate human beings or ethnic cleansing as barbaric and a crime against humanity; calls on the UN and all international actors to

investigate those who incited and perpetrated the ethnic cleansing of pastoralists and the barbaric killing of farmers in the mile belts of Nigeria to be brought to justice;

9. Commends the significant progress made by the Buhari government the on the security challenges facing Nigeria, and in addressing corruption; further offers its support in achieving this objective and in seeking to break the link between corrupt practices and terrorism;
10. Is concerned by recent population movements due to conflict and the estimated 3.7 million individuals who will need food assistance in 2018;
11. Welcomes the announcement by the Commission in June 2017 that additional funds were freed to boost urgent humanitarian aid to the region and work towards sustainable development;
12. Urges the international community to help Nigeria and the neighbouring countries who host refugees and displaced persons (Cameroon, Chad and Niger) and to provide all necessary medical and psychological assistance to those in need;
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Chairman of the African Union, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the Pan-African Parliament and representatives of ECOWAS.