



---

*Plenary sitting*

---

**B8-0150/2018**

12.3.2018

## **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 Syria  
(2018/2626(RSP))

**Javier Couso Permuy, Paloma López Bermejo, Merja Kyllönen,  
Takis Hadjigeorgiou, Neoklis Sylikiotis, Younous Omarjee,  
Ángela Vallina, Miguel Urbán Crespo, Tania González Peñas,  
Xabier Benito Ziluaga, Lola Sánchez Caldentey, Estefanía Torres  
Martínez, Sofia Sakorafa**  
on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

**B8-0150/2018**

**European Parliament resolution on Syria  
(2018/2626(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Syria and the ISIS offensive, in particular those of 11 June 2015 on Syria: situation in Palmyra and the case of Mazen Darwish<sup>1</sup>, of 30 April 2015 on the situation of the Yamouk refugee camp in Syria<sup>2</sup>, of 12 February 2015 on the humanitarian crisis in Iraq and Syria, in particular in the IS context<sup>3</sup> and of 13 September 2017 on arms export: implementation of Common Position 2008/944/CFSP<sup>4</sup>,
  - having regard to the relevant UN Security Council resolutions,
  - having regard to the Charter of the United Nations,
  - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
  - having regard to the Geneva Conventions on refugees,
  - having regard to the Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council of 14 March 2017 entitled ‘Elements for an EU Strategy for Syria’ (JOIN(2017)0011),
  - having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council of 26 February 2018,
  - having regard to the statement of 6 March 2018 by Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) Mogherini and Commissioner Christos Stylianides on the situation in Eastern Ghouta and elsewhere in Syria,
  - having regard to the report of 16 May 2016 prepared for the UN Economic and Social Commission on the Humanitarian Impact of Syria-Related Unilateral Restrictive Measures,
  - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the escalation of the Syrian conflict is the result of foreign regional and international powers exploiting the situation for their own gain, leading to a bloody war;
- B. whereas in the seventh year of the crisis in Syria, the scale, severity and complexity of needs across the country remain overwhelming; whereas 13.1 million people require humanitarian assistance; whereas of these, 5.6 million people are in acute need and are vulnerable on a number of fronts as a result of displacement, exposure to hostilities, and

---

<sup>1</sup> OJ C 407, 4.11.2016, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 346, 21.9.2016, p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 310, 25.8.2016, p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2017)0344.

limited access to basic goods and services;

- C. whereas dangerous and worrying escalations of violence are ongoing, both within and outside the de-escalation zones established by the Astana guarantors; whereas the fighting continues, in particular in Idlib and Hama; whereas heavy and sustained airstrikes are taking place in the northwest and in Eastern Ghouta;
- D. whereas civilians have been killed and injured on a horrific scale – reports suggest more than 1 000 civilian casualties in the first week of February alone – and strikes have continued to hit hospitals, schools and markets; whereas there have been a number of allegations of chlorine attacks in Ghouta, Idlib and Afrin; whereas at least 320 000 people have been displaced in just two months as a result of fighting in Idlib – an area that already hosts over 1.2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs); whereas there are reports of heavy mortar shelling throughout residential Damascus, wounding and killing civilians and damaging infrastructure;
- E. whereas UN Security Council resolution 2401 called for a ceasefire, in order to enable a durable humanitarian pause for at least 30 consecutive days throughout Syria and to grant civilians the humanitarian assistance they need; whereas on 5 February 2018 the first UN humanitarian convoy reached Eastern Ghouta since the ceasefire was called for, bringing healthcare and nutrition supplies, and food for 70 000 people; whereas, unfortunately, not all the supplies in the convoy could be delivered owing to pressure from terrorist groups; whereas a second convoy is currently being prepared;
- F. whereas ISIS/Da'esh and other jihadist groups have committed atrocities, including brutal executions and unspeakable sexual violence, abductions, torture, forced conversions and the enslavement of women and girls; whereas children have been recruited and used in terrorist attacks; whereas there are serious concerns about the welfare of the population currently under the control of ISIS/Da'esh and their possible use as human shields during the liberation campaign; whereas these crimes may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity;
- G. whereas serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law have been committed by all sides; whereas civilian areas, schools, hospitals, humanitarian workers and refugee camps have been deliberately targeted by terrorists groups; whereas these constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity and should be investigated;
- H. whereas the conflict is also spilling over beyond Syria's borders in various directions, and there has been increased military intervention from multiple sources; whereas there are reports of exchanges of fire between Turkish and Syrian Government forces in Idlib, and between the US-led coalition and pro-Syrian Government forces in the Euphrates valley; whereas Israeli jets have been striking at targets in Syria in response to an alleged violation of Israeli territory by an Iranian drone;
- I. whereas the ongoing escalation in violence is undermining efforts to secure a political solution; whereas, in accordance with the Geneva Communiqué and UN Security Council resolutions, all parties must be reminded once again of the critical need for the conflict in Syria to be resolved through a Syrian-led political process, in order to bring about a peace agreement that meets the aspirations of the Syrian people;

- J. whereas the three countries hosting the largest number of Syrian refugees are Turkey (2 973 980), Lebanon (1 011 366) and Jordan (659 246);
- K. whereas several Member States are still denying refugees from Syria and other countries the right to asylum and are violating basic policies and values of the European Union;
- L. whereas the EU and its Member States are helping to nurture the criminal and dangerous business of human smuggling by building fences and increasingly sealing off external borders against migrants and refugees, without providing possibilities for safe and legal access to the EU; whereas the EU and its Member States are therefore failing to deliver an adequate response to the refugee crisis in the EU's neighbourhood; whereas Turkey's systematic violation of human rights effectively renders the EU-Turkey migration agreement a breach of the Geneva Convention;
- M. whereas the 'economic sanctions' unilaterally imposed on Syria by the United States and the EU are the most complicated and far-reaching sanctions regimes ever enforced; whereas these sanctions have a disastrous impact on the civilian population and impede humanitarian aid; whereas the UN report on the Humanitarian Impact of Syria-Related Unilateral Restrictive Measures calls for a review of these sanction policies;
- N. whereas the conflict in Syria continues to deteriorate as a result of the interference of regional and international foreign powers; whereas the war is creating a patchwork of segregated and competing regions run by different armed groups, and is enabling terrorist groups such as ISIS/Da'esh to thrive; whereas the United States, Turkey and others have bombarded Syria in violation of international law;
1. Reiterates its grave distress at the continued severity of the devastating humanitarian situation in Syria, including in Eastern Ghouta, Idlib Governorate, northern Hama Governorate, Rukhban and Raqqa, and at the fact that urgent humanitarian assistance, including medical assistance, is now required by more than 13.1 million people in Syria, of whom 6.1 million are internally displaced, 2.5 million, including Palestinian refugees, live in hard-to-reach areas, and hundreds of thousands are civilians trapped in besieged areas;
  2. Expresses outrage at the unacceptable levels of violence escalating in several parts of the country, particularly in Idlib Governorate and Eastern Ghouta, but also in Damascus City, and at the attacks against civilians, civilian objects and medical facilities, which are further compounding suffering and displacing large numbers of people; recalls, in this regard, the legal obligations of all parties under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as well as all relevant decisions of the Security Council, especially to cease all attacks against civilians and civilian objects, including those involving attacks on schools and medical facilities;
  3. Emphasises that the humanitarian situation will continue to deteriorate further in the absence of a political solution to the Syrian conflict in line with resolution 2254 (2015); calls upon all parties to make progress in this regard, and to undertake confidence-building measures, including the early release of any arbitrarily detained persons, particularly women and children;

4. Emphasises that ending the war and finding a political solution to the conflicts requires dialogue with all elements of Syrian society, without excluding anyone; reminds the EU institutions that the denial of dialogue with any one party to a conflict is incompatible with the ambition to mediate in a conflict;
5. Rejects unreservedly the idea that a long-term solution to the Syrian conflict can be found on the basis of military action; calls on the parties to urgently renew their commitment to a political solution and to make progress in the Geneva talks hosted by the United Nations; strongly supports the peaceful political dialogue and the need for a Syrian-led process which meets the legitimate aspirations and will of all sections of the Syrian people;
6. Demands that all parties cease hostilities without delay, and immediately undertake to abide fully and comprehensively by this requirement;
7. Condemns all parties to the conflict which violate the ceasefire agreed at the UN Security Council;
8. Calls on all UN Member States to use their influence with the parties to ensure the cessation of hostilities and the fulfilment of existing commitments, and to support efforts to create conditions for a durable and lasting ceasefire; stresses the need for relevant guarantees from those Member States;
9. Demands that all parties allow safe, unimpeded and sustained access for the humanitarian convoys of the UN and its implementing partners, including medical and surgical supplies, to all requested areas and communities; demands that all parties allow the UN and its implementing partners to undertake safe, unconditional medical evacuations, based on medical need and urgency, subject to standard UN security assessments;
10. Demands the cessation of kidnappings of civilians by terrorist groups, and requires all parties to allow the delivery of humanitarian assistance, including medical assistance, specifically in East Ghouta, Yarmuk, Foua and Kefraya;
11. Calls for humanitarian mine action to be accelerated throughout Syria as a matter of urgency;
12. Strongly supports the territorial integrity of Syria and the right of the Syrian people to determine their future without foreign interference; expresses concern that the successive UN-led peace talks did not lead to an agreement to put an end to the war;
13. Stresses the fact that the conflict has been exacerbated by the arms trade and the supply of weapons; strongly condemns the role that the various Western interventions of recent years have played in fostering the radicalisation of individuals, especially in the Middle East and the Southern Neighbourhood countries; stresses that such policies are promoting, not countering, terrorism and should therefore be abandoned; calls for an arms embargo to be established within the EU regional framework in order to prevent yet more European weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists; believes that exports to Saudi Arabia are non-compliant with EU legislation, in view of the country's involvement in grave breaches of humanitarian law, as established by the competent UN

authorities; reiterates its call from 26 February 2016 regarding the urgent need to impose an arms embargo on Saudi Arabia;

14. Strongly condemns the direct or non-direct support (in the form of finance, arms, training, etc.) that the United States, the EU, Turkey and the monarchies of the Gulf region have been providing to terrorist groups; calls in particular on the United States, the EU Member States and regional players, especially Saudi Arabia and Turkey, to stop financing all militias and, more specifically, to stop buying oil from oilfields controlled by ISIS/Da'esh and transported by truck through Turkey, as brought to light by reports submitted to the UN Security Council; believes that mechanisms are required to stop the financing of terrorism through offshore entities involving states and financial institutions, and to stop arms trafficking and the buying and selling of energy resources and raw materials which benefit terrorist groups;
15. Condemns the Israeli violations of Syrian sovereignty which have become permanent with the occupation of the Golan Heights;
16. Expresses deep concern at Turkey's intervention in areas of Syria which are controlled by Kurdish forces, especially in Afrin Region; strongly calls on Turkey to stop transferring the illegal and violent fight against the Kurdish population in Turkey to areas inhabited by Kurdish people in Syria and Iraq; condemns Turkey's repression of the Kurdish population and its interference in the Syrian war, as well as its support to terrorist groups by failing to take any action on its permeable borders;
17. Reiterates that terrorism can only be eradicated by addressing its roots, i.e. poverty, exploitation and society's inability to address peoples' needs; believes that the utmost respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of states such as Syria, as well as respect for the multicultural nature of their societies, constitute the sole means of preventing the spread of terrorist ideology;
18. Strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons in the war in Syria; demands an independent investigation, including by means of a presence on the ground, to determine the true origin of these attacks; notes the process of Syrian chemical disarmament carried out under the supervision of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and with the mediation of the United States and Russia;
19. Encourages the EU Member States to provide Syrian refugees with protection and humanitarian assistance; condemns the de facto denial of international protection to Syrians in the European Union through the entry into force of the EU-Turkey statement whereby 'all new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey into Greek islands as from 20 March 2016 will be returned to Turkey' on the basis that Turkey is deemed a safe third country, which this House rejects; recalls that the EU and its Member States have a responsibility to refugees and immigrants who are fleeing from war, chaos, economic misery, hunger and death and who are suffering because of global neoliberal economic policies;
20. Calls for EU embassies and consular offices to immediately issue humanitarian visas for asylum seekers from Syria and to find safe and legal ways for asylum – something which the EU-Turkey deal denies – and for the enforcement of the international commitments made by the EU and its Member States regarding migration, namely

through resettlement programmes at EU level; calls for full cooperation by all EU Member States participating in such programmes; stresses that, in the context of an inclusive and credible dialogue, the Syrian people should determine the appropriate process and mechanisms to achieve justice, reconciliation, truth and accountability for gross violations and abuses of international law, as well as reparations and effective remedies for victims;

21. Deplores the disastrous effects of the unilateral restrictive measures for the civilian population; urges the Council to put an immediate end to all of the economic sanctions against Syria, which have proven to mostly affect the civilian population;
22. Calls for the EU to support the Syrian reconciliation process and efforts that have successfully pacified areas that cover more than 3 million citizens, as well as the relocation of terrorist fighters to the Idlib region, and the more than 100 000 amnesties for former terrorists to enable them to return to normality and integrate back into civilian life;
23. Demands that the EU, in coordination with the Syrian authorities, contributes actively to the reconstruction of Syria, by engaging in post-conflict planning, which is the focus of the Syria strategy, and by focusing on assistance with reconstruction, on the creation of jobs and business opportunities, on education and psycho-social support for Syrian children and youth, and on the promotion of equal access to education for girls; calls on the Commission to involve Parliament closely in the strategic planning for these actions;
24. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the President of the European Council, the President of the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the presidents of the parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of the Syrian Arab Republic, the UN Secretary-General, the Secretary-General of the Union for the Mediterranean, and the League of Arab States.