



Plenary sitting

B9-0326/2021

7.6.2021

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 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Afghanistan
(2021/2712(RSP))

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on behalf of the PPE Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Afghanistan
(2021/2712(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Afghanistan,
 - having regard to the EU-Afghanistan Joint Way Forward (JWF) on migration issues of 2 October 2016,
 - having regard to the Cooperation Agreement of 18 February 2017 on Partnership and Development between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, of the other part¹,
 - having regard to the Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council entitled ‘Elements for an EU Strategy on Afghanistan’ of 24 July 2017,
 - having regard to the ‘Connecting Europe and Asia - Building blocks for an EU Strategy’ adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council in October 2018,
 - having regard to UN Security Council Resolution 2513 (2020) of 10 March 2020 on the situation in Afghanistan,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on Afghanistan of 29 May 2020,
 - having regard to the 2020 International Ministerial Pledging Conference (Afghanistan Conference) held on 23 and 24 November 2020,
 - having regard to the UN General Assembly resolution of 10 December 2020 on the situation in Afghanistan,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas since 2001, many EU Member States, NATO partners and allied countries have contributed military and civilian resources to the stabilisation and development of Afghanistan, suffering heavy casualties and losses; whereas a stable and independent Afghanistan that can provide for itself and deny a safe haven to terrorist groups is still in the vital security interests of EU, NATO and their member countries;
- B. whereas almost 3 million people are living in internal displacement as a result of violence and another 1 million because of natural disasters; whereas Iran and Pakistan host several million Afghan refugees and migrants;
- C. whereas the EU’s contribution to Afghanistan over the last 20 years has led to substantial gains - in life expectancy, literacy, maternal and child mortality and

¹ OJ L 67, 14.3.2017, p. 3.

women's rights; whereas the EU has pledged EUR 1.2 billion in both long-term and emergency assistance for the period 2021-2025; whereas between 2002 and 2020 the EU provided more than EUR 4 billion; whereas Afghanistan is the beneficiary country that receives the most EU development assistance in the world;

- D. whereas the Afghan government effectively controls approximately 55 % of the country's districts, where around 63 % of the population of the country live;
- E. whereas COVID-19 has caused both humanitarian and economic hardships on top of already severe poverty, food insecurity and climate vulnerability;
- F. whereas on 29 February 2020 in Doha the United States and the Taliban reached the Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan, which called for direct intra-Afghan peace talks between the Taliban, the Afghan government and other groups; whereas this agreement provided for a timeline for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan by May 2021, and in return the Taliban pledged to prevent territory under their control from being used by terrorist groups;
- G. whereas the inter-Afghan Peace Negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban began on 12 September 2020 in Doha aiming for an inclusive political settlement and a permanent and comprehensive peace; whereas the negotiations are currently in a stalemate;
- H. whereas violence in Afghanistan has surged since autumn 2020, and further worsened in 2021;
- I. whereas on 14 April 2021 the US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken announced the full withdrawal of US and NATO troops by 11 September 2021;
- J. whereas the security situation throughout the country remains dire, with high levels of violence against civilians and Afghan security forces; whereas the limited capabilities of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) remain one of the critical factors influencing the security situation in Afghanistan; whereas during Ramadan alone more than 220 civilians were killed, and more than 500 were injured;
- K. whereas the EU stands fully behind the UN General Assembly resolution of 10 December 2020, which neither supports nor recognises the restoration of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan;
- 1. Considers that Afghanistan is at a critical juncture, as the confluence of the fragile domestic situation, a deteriorating security situation, intra-Afghan peace talks effectively in a stalemate and the decision to withdraw US and NATO troops by 11 September 2021, which can bring new uncertainties, less stability, danger of intensification of internal conflicts and a vacuum that in the worst case scenario will be filled by the Taliban; expresses concern that this would be a very worrying perspective for the country and for the sustainability of the socio-political achievements and progress of the last 20 years; recalls that the Taliban aim to create a theocratic Islamic government, and might not be willing to enter into a power-sharing arrangement with a democratically elected government;

2. Reaffirms the principled political commitment of the European Union to support the people of Afghanistan on their path towards peace, security, stability, democracy, prosperity and self-reliance, for the benefit of all Afghans; recalls that a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan free of terrorism is a cornerstone for its own stability and development, as well as that of the entire region and beyond; recalls that the commitment of the European Union will not change with the withdrawal of US and NATO troops from the country;
3. Reaffirms that a negotiated political settlement leading to peace must build on the economic, social and political achievements of the last 20 years; underscores that all Afghan actors must commit actively to a meaningful, inclusive and substantial Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process that is internationally supported; highlights that this is more important than ever as the date of the withdrawal of US and NATO troops is fast approaching;
4. Stresses that the commitment and level of cooperation demonstrated by all actors in Afghanistan, in particular the Taliban, will determine the EU's political and financial support for the country's future; recalls that EU support is conditional on effectively improving inclusive and accountable governance, strengthening institutions, democratic pluralism, the rule of law, combating corruption, strengthening independent media, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all Afghans, especially women, children and all persons belonging to minorities and groups at risk; recalls that girls' right to education, which is a great achievement of the last 20 years, should be undisputed;
5. Recalls that in order to build on the achievements of the last 20 years, the Afghan state should be genuinely committed to fighting and preventing terrorism and armed groups, drug production and trafficking, addressing the root causes of and managing irregular migration; tackling regional instability; striving for poverty eradication; preventing radicalisation leading to violent extremism; fighting against the impunity of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law;
6. Expresses concern about the continuing high level of violence and the volatile security situation in Afghanistan, in particular the high level of civilian casualties, including targeted killings of media reporters, civil activists and civil servants; urges all sides to immediately agree on a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire; expresses concern about the fragility and instability of the Afghan government and its lack of control over much of the country, which exacerbates the impact of the violence of the civilian population;
7. Urges the Afghan government to pursue genuine accountability and thoroughly investigate the increased number of attacks on civilian facilities, including schools and mosques, such as the 8 May 2021 attack on the Syed Al-Shahda Hazara girl's school where 85 girls were killed or the attack of 12 May 2020 on the maternity wing of the Dasht-e Barchi hospital in Kabul supported by Médecins Sans Frontières;
8. Acknowledges that security and stability are vital to sustainable development and progress; expresses concern about the threat posed by terrorism to Afghanistan and the region, in particular the continuing presence of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL-Da'esh) and their affiliates, in particular ISIL-Khorasan Province and Al-Qaida;

condemns all terrorist activity and all terrorist attacks in Afghanistan; underscores the importance of the effective fight against financing of terrorism and of dismantling financial networks supporting terrorism; recalls that the escalation of violence is not conducive to any viable peace prospects; emphasises the large and sustained numbers of casualties among the ANDSF, and recalls the need for providing sustained long-term financing to the ANDSF;

9. Recalls that Afghanistan is a landlocked country situated at the junction connecting Asia and the Middle East, and recognises that support and positive cooperation from neighbouring countries and regional powers, in particular China, Iran, India, Russia and Pakistan, are essential to the stabilisation, development and economic viability of Afghanistan; underlines the crucial role of these countries in the stabilisation of Afghanistan and in not allowing it to descend into chaos once foreign troops leave; stresses the need for increased EU-US coordination on Afghanistan in order to preserve an important role for them in Afghanistan to the extent possible;
10. Recognises that the end goal of EU aid to Afghanistan is to help the country's government and economy eradicate poverty and develop to a state of independence and growth with internal development and regional cooperation through external trade and sustainable public investment, in order to diminish over-reliance on foreign aid, by contributing to the social, economic and environmental development of Afghanistan; regrets that the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the already serious economic challenges in Afghanistan;
11. Underscores the still unresolved issue of cultivation, production, trade and trafficking of illicit drugs in Afghanistan, which poses a threat to peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region; emphasises the need for the Afghan government to step up efforts to counter this threat, in which it should be wholeheartedly supported by the international community; recalls in this regard the problem of smuggling of human beings;
12. Recognises that the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic is having a devastating impact in Afghanistan, with profound challenges to the country's health system and to its socio-economic and humanitarian situations, and has worsened the food crisis and increased poverty; considers that addressing the short- and long-term consequences of the pandemic will require the support of all Afghan parties and the international community; recalls that the EU has mobilised EUR 147 million to address the immediate health crisis and as humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, together with an additional EUR 35 million at the beginning of 2021 for the fight against the pandemic;
13. Recalls the responsibility of the governments of the countries withdrawing their troops from Afghanistan to protect and, if need be, repatriate thousands of local staff, in particular translators, who have been supporting their effort and whose lives might now be in grave danger;
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Envoy for Afghanistan, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and the Government and Parliament of the Islamic Republic of

Afghanistan.