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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0260/2022**

2.5.2022

## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on threats to stability, security and democracy in Western and Sahelian Africa  
(2022/2650(RSP))

**Ryszard Antoni Legutko, Raffaele Fitto, Anna Fotyga, Adam Bielan,  
Alexandr Vondra, Angel Dzhambazki, Anna Zalewska, Assita Kanko,  
Bogdan Rzońca, Elżbieta Rafalska, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Ryszard  
Czarnecki, Valdemar Tomaševski, Witold Jan Waszczykowski, Zbigniew  
Kuźmiuk, Carlo Fidanza**  
on behalf of the ECR Group

**European Parliament resolution on threats to stability, security and democracy in Western and Sahelian Africa (2022/2650(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions of 16 September 2020 on EU-African security cooperation in the Sahel region, West Africa and the Horn of Africa<sup>1</sup>, of 25 March 2021 on a new EU Africa Strategy – a partnership for sustainable and inclusive development<sup>2</sup>, and of 23 June 2021 on the role of the EU's development cooperation and humanitarian assistance in addressing the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 19 April 2021 on the EU's integrated strategy in the Sahel region,
- having regard to the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,
- having regard to the joint statement of the 6th European Union - African Union Summit held on 17 and 18 February 2022 entitled 'A Joint Vision for 2030',
- having regard to the joint statements of the foreign and development ministers of the G7 of 12 December 2021,
- having regard to Resolution 2531 (2020) adopted by the UN Security Council on 29 June 2020,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child,
- having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights,
- having regard to the partnership agreement between the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part, signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000 (Cotonou Agreement),
- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 385, 22.9.2021, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 494, 8.12.2021, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 81, 18.2.2022, p. 13.

humanitarian aid<sup>4</sup>,

- having regard to the statements by the Council and the Commission of 4 May 2022 on threats to stability, security and democracy in West and Sahelian Africa,
- A. whereas the humanitarian situation in West and Sahelian Africa is deteriorating at an alarming pace, with unprecedented levels of forced displacement and food insecurity;
- B. whereas the belt of countries below the Sahara has been plagued by instability for years, including armed conflict, terrorism, food insecurity, corruption, social and political unrest, severe political repression and brutal religious violence;
- C. whereas West and Sahelian Africa is confronting an unprecedented rural exodus, since people who have been forcibly displaced are moving to urban areas where they encounter new risks and where threats to women and young people are particularly severe, including sexual and labour exploitation, forced recruitment and trafficking; whereas insecurity, the lack of state presence and education, poverty and high unemployment are root causes of the recruitment basis of jihadist terrorist groups in the region;
- D. whereas women and children are particularly vulnerable and affected the most by the instability and humanitarian crisis;
- E. whereas if the countries in the region and international actors do not take proper action, these trends will intensify in the years to come, exacerbating crises, violence and migration;
- F. whereas the countries of the Sahel are among the world's poorest: Niger is at the very bottom of the UN Human Development Index, and Chad, Burkina Faso and Mali rank just above;
- G. whereas four countries in the Sahel and West Africa, namely Burkina Faso, Mali, Chad and Guinea, have experienced coups in the last 18 months; whereas these countries are a key part of Africa that is rich in mineral wealth while also riddled with Islamist terrorist groups;
- H. whereas the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has called on Sahel and West African countries to return to constitutional order;
- I. whereas Islamist militants, including terrorist groups affiliated with ISIS such as Boko Haram, the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM), the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara and the Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP), have been able to strengthen their foothold in the Sahel and West Africa and increase their terror activities against civilians and the political establishment, worsening an already unstable political and security situation;
- J. whereas existing security challenges have exacerbated the devastating impact of COVID-19; whereas the pandemic has unfolded as the region faces a food crisis of

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<sup>4</sup> OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1.

exceptional magnitude that is affecting millions of people and creating a high level of insecurity;

- K. whereas human rights conditions remain dire in West and Sahelian Africa and have been exacerbated by the fragile security situation; whereas Islamist groups have terrorised innocent civilians, in particular Christians and those of other faiths;
  - L. whereas in the last decade regional actors, as well as the international community, including the UN, the EU and European countries, in particular France, have deployed more than 20 000 military personnel to mitigate the crisis and bring about security;
  - M. whereas despite these missions, security and governance trends across the region continue to deteriorate;
  - N. whereas Russia is seizing opportunities in West and Sahelian Africa, including by deploying the Wagner Group, which has been responsible for a wide range of human rights violations; whereas over the course of several days in late March 2022, Malian army forces and foreign soldiers – identified by several sources as Russians – executed in small groups an estimated 300 civilian men who had been rounded up in the central Malian town of Moura;
  - O. whereas the threat of and support for jihadism in the region has at times been underestimated by the international community; whereas Islamist extremists pose a significant threat to the social cohesion and religious plurality of the societies in these countries, which also has direct consequences for Europe in terms of legitimate security concerns and increased migration flows;
  - P. whereas the security and stability of the Sahel and West Africa have direct and indirect effects on the rest of Africa and Europe;
  - Q. whereas cooperation within the G5 Sahel and ECOWAS must be intensified;
1. Reaffirms its strong support to the peoples of West and Sahelian Africa in their efforts to find solutions to the multifaceted challenges facing their countries based on democratic principles and respect for human rights, as well as support for security and cooperation in the region;
  2. Regrets and condemns in the strongest possible terms the recent killings, loss of lives and the human rights violations in the countries of West and Sahelian Africa; calls on the defence and security forces to remain committed to their core duties of protecting the population by non-violent means;
  3. Is deeply concerned about the worsening political and security crisis, increasing violence, and the deepening humanitarian crisis in the region; calls for a shift towards a more integrated approach to stabilisation with a strong focus on civilian and political dimensions; demands the immediate restoration of constitutional order;
  4. Condemns the use of excessive force against protestors and political opponents, and violations of the freedoms of the press, expression and assembly; stresses that these freedoms must be ensured at all times and strongly urges respect for international

commitments, such as the right to physical integrity and the prohibition of torture and of summary or arbitrary executions;

5. Strongly condemns the terrorist activities of Islamist groups against innocent civilians in the region and their attempts to undermine the security and stability of the countries concerned as well as the wider region; condemns in the strongest possible terms the attacks against Christians as well as those of other faiths and the destruction of places of worship; reiterates that freedom of religion or belief is a universal human right;
6. Notes that the EU will wind down some of the training of Mali's forces delivered by EU the Training Mission (EUTM) in Mali owing to the continued cooperation between the Russian Wagner Group and the ruling military junta in Mali; insists that the EU remain committed to the region and support a mandate renewal for the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA);
7. Recommends the expansion of military collaboration with the states of the Gulf of Guinea, in particular Ivory Coast;
8. Strongly condemns the deployment of the Wagner Group by Russia in several countries in the Sahel and West Africa; reiterates its gravest concern about the wide range of human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law that purportedly continue to be committed by Russian-led security contractors which should be treated as proxy organisations of the Russian state; calls for sanctions against all relevant individuals and entities affiliated with the Wagner Group, as well as individuals and entities working with them; demands that international investigators be allowed to access the area in the Moura massacre was committed;
9. Calls on all relevant countries and institutions to conduct impartial, prompt, effective and transparent investigations into human rights violations that may have occurred and for those responsible to be held to account; calls on the international community to consider sanctioning those who are responsible for grave human rights violations; welcomes in this regard the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime (EU Magnitsky Act) and supports expanding its scope to include corruption-related offences;
10. Supports the actions announced by the African Union and the actions taken by ECOWAS in defence of democracy and the rule of law; supports ECOWAS' efforts to establish a roadmap for human rights reforms and accountability, jointly agreed with the local political class and civil society, with a view to preventing further human rights violations as part of a holistic effort to settle the crisis;
11. Calls for the governments of West African and Sahel countries to organise an inclusive political dialogue aimed at finding a peaceful and lasting solution to the crisis; calls on the international community to help facilitate such a dialogue by offering to play a mediating role;
12. Points to the EU's and Member States' significant contribution in terms of development cooperation and humanitarian assistance; supports the recommendations adopted by the members of the Sahel Alliance at their third General Assembly held on 4 April 2022 in Madrid to maintain and adapt support for the benefit of the G5 Sahel populations, to provide a coordinated response to the food crisis, to continue efforts in the most fragile

areas and to intensify support for greater socio-economic integration and the increased participation of young people and women in political life; calls for the continued alleviation of the humanitarian situation in the region through supporting the governments and local organisations in establishing shelter for internally displaced persons and education for children and ensuring that their rights to health and work are respected;

13. Welcomes transregional projects, such as the Nigeria-Morocco Gas Pipeline;
14. Points out that the humanitarian crisis in the Sahel and West Africa is a crisis on multiple fronts and that humanitarian needs continue to rise owing to the combined effect of increasingly violent conflicts, deep poverty, climate change, and unprecedented food insecurity and malnutrition; calls on the holders of political power to facilitate the work of humanitarian organisations by ensuring their unfettered humanitarian access and enabling their reporting on the plight and needs of internally displaced persons;
15. Calls for the EU and its Member States to use the political leverage provided by development aid and other bilateral programmes to enhance the defence of human rights;
16. Stresses that support for good governance, civil society, development and investments in a more positive future for local communities remains essential; notes, however, that without security, financial support risks being wasted; calls, therefore, for the urgent establishment of a renewed Africa-Europe architecture for peace and security, in accordance with the joint statement of the 6th EU-AU Summit of 17 and 18 February 2022, in order to tackle growing common security challenges, including the shared goal of combating the spread of terrorism throughout the African continent; insists that this should be part of a more extensive shift in mindset in EU-African relations away from development aid, which is often misused in some countries and contributes to the rise in corruption, and towards cooperation between Europe and Africa on the basis of equal partnership rather than aid dependency, while paying more attention to linking the remaining aid to the fulfilment of necessary parameters and prerequisites by governments of receiving countries, and switching from filling budget gaps to providing incentives for growth and enhancing trade capabilities and entrepreneurship;
17. Underlines that countries in the region are further burdened by the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic; calls for enhanced cooperation at all levels to effectively address these consequences;
18. 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 institutions of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States.