



Plenary sitting

B9-0523/2022

22.11.2022

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 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on forced displacement of people as a result of escalating conflict in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
(2022/2957(RSP))

Abir Al-Sahlani, Petras Auštrevičius, Malik Azmani, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Olivier Chastel, Katalin Cseh, Klemen Grošelj, Bernard Guetta, Karin Karlsbro, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Nathalie Loiseau, Karen Melchior, Javier Nart, Urmas Paet, Frédérique Ries, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Michal Šimečka, Ramona Strugariu, Dragoș Tudorache, Hilde Vautmans
on behalf of the Renew Group

B9-0523/2022

European Parliament resolution on forced displacement of people as a result of escalating conflict in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (2022/2957(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on DRC,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948,
 - having regard to Rule 144(5) and 132(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. Whereas in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, the resurgence of the M23 rebel military group has further deteriorated an already dire situation and displaced thousands more civilians in a region where armed groups, and at times government soldiers, have committed widespread abuses over the past year;
- B. Whereas the M23, with alleged links to Rwanda, has had a history of human rights abuses and has indiscriminately targeted civilians in the past, through executions and the use of sexual violence as tool for warfare, while Congolese and Rwandan authorities failed to hold the group accountable for past crimes,
- C. Whereas the resurgence of the M23 comes as the security situation in eastern DR Congo has deteriorated over the past year, with other armed groups, and at times government soldiers, committing widespread violence, unlawful killings, and other grave abuses, as all parties to the conflict in North Kivu have increasingly used explosive weapons - mortar fire and artillery shelling - in combat, putting civilians and civilian structures at greater risk,
- D. Whereas the Democratic Republic of Congo is already home to 6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), the highest number in Africa, more than 1 million Congolese refugees live in neighbouring countries, and the recent escalation has resulted in another 40,000 IDPs in the first week of November alone; whereas the newly displaced are joining the ranks of about 200,000 IDPs forced to flee their homes since late March when the latest surge in violence began; whereas given the instability in the region, the DRC itself hosts more than half a million refugees from neighbouring countries;
- E. Whereas lives of thousands of people in overcrowded, unsanitary camps for internally displaced people (IDPs) in eastern DRC are seriously at risk, in particular children, women and LGBTIQ-persons;
- F. Whereas sexual and gender-based violence is widespread and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law are reported regularly;
- G. Whereas some 27 million people in DRC are acutely food insecure, more than a quarter of the population; whereas over 857,000 children are acutely malnourished and require treatment;

- H. Whereas these armaments will only result in further escalation and in high civilian casualties; whereas new IDPs arrive daily, escalating the extent of the humanitarian crisis, and humanitarian access is becoming increasingly more restricted;
- I. Whereas the EU humanitarian funds were worth EUR 54.4 million in 2022 and EUR 70 million the previous year, directed mainly to the East, the most fragile area and include food and nutrition, healthcare, water and sanitation, education;
- J. Whereas journalists increasingly face harassment, threats and arrest;
1. Condemns ongoing M23 offensives in eastern DRC that put civilians at risk, Calls on the M23 to withdraw immediately from all the areas it occupies;
 2. Calls on the M23 and other rebel groups to cease fighting and engage in the disarmament process;
 3. Urges all parties to respect international humanitarian law and minimise harm to civilians during renewed fighting;
 4. Urges Rwanda to cease any support for M23 rebels and to contribute to the easing of relations with its neighbour, which have been a source of conflict for three decades following the 1994 genocide;
 5. Calls for the sanctions against senior M23 commanders to be maintained and expanded to include those newly found responsible for serious abuses, as well as senior officials from across the region complicit in the armed group's abuses;
 6. Call upon the authorities of the Democratic Republic of Congo to seek accountability and justice for abuses committed during previous and current armed conflicts on Congolese territory;
 7. Urges all governments concerned to ensure that any political settlement rejects an amnesty for those responsible for grave international crimes and prevents abusive M23 commanders to integrate into Congo's armed forces;
 8. Expressed its support to all regional diplomatic efforts to de-escalate and resolve the current crisis within the framework of the Nairobi Process and the Luanda Roadmap; Calls on the EU to offer its support in these efforts;
 9. Welcomes the announced peace talks on eastern DRC announced by the East African Community (EAC) scheduled to begin on 21 November in Nairobi;
 10. Calls on all the countries of the region to play a permanent positive role in the return to stability in the area; Strongly underlines the need for cross-border cooperation in the African Great Lakes region;
 11. Stresses that the EU and its Member States shall condition their support to the deployment of troops by regional neighbouring countries in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo to the development of a vetting mechanism in line with international standards for deployed troops, a strong protection mandate and due diligence policy, and the development of a human rights monitoring mechanism;
 12. Reiterates its commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and all the countries in the region;

13. Calls on the EU and other international partners to continue to provide humanitarian aid to the region;
14. Insists that the EU-funded humanitarian aid shall be targeted at helping vulnerable people to and provide food assistance and nutrition, shelter, protection, emergency healthcare, including care for survivors of sexual violence, improve water, sanitation and hygiene conditions, and ensure that children caught in humanitarian crises can pursue education;
15. Urges the EU and its Members States to ensure that the upcoming EU strategy for the African Great Lakes adequately reflects the numerous and serious human rights challenges at both country and regional level, in particular in the DR Congo, commits to concrete and meaningful promotion of freedoms of association and peaceful assembly, freedom of expression, and stands up against harassment, detention, torture, and ill-treatment of civil society activists, journalists, opposition members, and other critics, links future improvements of bilateral cooperation to clear human rights benchmarks, and makes it clear that accountability for serious human rights violations is crucial to ensure respect for human rights and long-term stability in the Great Lakes region;
16. Urges the EU, its members states, the UN and the AU to support a clear strategy to address impunity for serious abuses and press the authorities of the Democratic Republic of Congo to carry out a security sector overhaul, including adopting a plan to address impunity for grave human rights violations, with a vetting mechanism for the military and other security services, an internationalised justice entity, and a comprehensive reparations program for victims of abuses, as well as an effective demobilisation program aimed at militia and armed group fighters;
17. Condemns security force suppression of peaceful demonstrations and dissent and calls on the DR Congo authorities to ensure that democratic elections meet international standards, develop an accurate registration process with the timely publication of a voters' list, make a commitment not to exclude lawful candidates or voters, ensure free campaigning by candidates and parties, and require transparent vote tabulation and reporting of results.
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the ACP-EU Council of Ministers and Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the President, Prime Minister and Parliament of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of other EAC countries, and the African Union and its institutions.