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Session document

5 July 2000

B5-0611/2000 }
B5-0622/2000 }
B5-0630/2000 }
B5-0637/2000 }
B5-0646/2000 }
RC1

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 50(5) of the Rules of Procedure by

- Johan van Hecke, Mario Mauro, John Corrie, Mary Banotti, Concepció Ferrer and Marielle de Sarnez on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
- Margrietus van den Berg on behalf of the PSE Group
- Francesco Rutelli and Sarah Ludford on behalf of the ELDR Group
- Matti Wuori and Nelly Maes on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
- Fodé Sylla and Luigi Vinci on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group
- Emma Bonino, Olivier Dupuis, Maurizio Turco, Marco Cappato, Marco Pannella, Benedetto Della Vedova and Gianfranco Dell’Alba on behalf of the TDI Group

replacing the motions by the following groups:

- ELDR (B5-0611/2000),
- PPE-DE (B5-0622/2000),
- GUE/NGL (B5-0630/2000),
- Verts/ALE (B5-0637/2000),
- PSE (B5-0646/2000),

on the abduction of children by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA)

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PE 292.972}
PE 292.983}
PE 292.991}
PE 293.703}
PE 293.712} RC1

European Parliament resolution on the abduction of children by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to having regard to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its Optional Protocols, the 1999 ILO Convention concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the 1977 Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions,
 - recalling its previous resolutions on child soldiers,
- A. whereas an armed rebellion has been raging in northern Uganda since 1986, currently under the name of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA),
- B. whereas the LRA is armed by the Sudanese Government army, which also provides it with food and logistical support, as a counter to the support of the Ugandan Government for the SPLA,
- C. whereas, according to UNICEF, the LRA has abducted at least 14 000 children, as young as seven years old, in northern Uganda, particularly in the districts of Gulu and Kitgum; whereas about 5000 children have since returned or escaped and thousands remain unaccounted for, of whom not more than 2000 are reported to be still alive,
- D. whereas these children are taken to camps in southern Sudan from where they are sent to fight both the Ugandan Government army in Ugandan territory and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in southern Sudan,
- E. whereas the children abducted by the LRA are subjected to extremes of brutality and are forced to conduct a reign of terror against their own people - the Acholi population - by killing innocent people or by cutting off limbs, ears and lips; whereas the total number of deaths is estimated at over 100 000 and the total number of displaced people currently at over 300 000,
- F. whereas girls are often submitted to sexual abuse and brutality by the LRA commanders, the best documented case being that of the girls from Aboke,
- G. whereas thousands of children have already died in captivity, from hunger and disease, during the fighting, or by being beaten and stabbed to death as punishment for those who tried to escape,
- H. whereas a Peace Accord between Uganda and Sudan was signed in Nairobi on 8 December 1999 which included a commitment by the Sudanese Government to stop its support for the LRA and guarantee the safe return of the abducted Ugandan children held in rebel camps in Sudan,

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- I. whereas the political will to implement the Peace Accord has been lacking on both sides, both countries have continued to support each other's armed rebels, and very few abducted children have been returned by Sudan,
 - J. whereas despite the Nairobi Peace Accord some 300 children have again been abducted by LRA rebels since the beginning of this year, according to UNICEF, 143 of whom have escaped,
 - K. whereas an amnesty law was approved by the Ugandan Parliament on 6 December 1999, but its implementation is being seriously delayed; whereas LRA leader Joseph Kony has already rejected the amnesty but some of his soldiers have applied for it,
 - L. whereas LRA representatives are allowed to collect funds, make public statements and operate freely on European Union territory, and have been travelling unhindered within the European Union and between the European Union and Sudan,
1. Strongly condemns the continuing abduction of children in northern Uganda by the LRA and the subsequent use of these children in armed combat, which is a flagrant violation of several UN Conventions and international humanitarian law;
 2. Calls on the Government of Sudan to stop supporting the Lord's Resistance Army and to cooperate in the immediate and unconditional release of all the abducted children, as stipulated in the Nairobi Peace Accord;
 3. Condemns the fact that, in Sudan, the use of child soldiers and the enslavement of children continues, and supports the action plan put forward by UNICEF to eradicate these practices;
 4. Calls on the Government of Sudan to consider the issue of the abducted children as a humanitarian issue and to separate it from the wider political issues in the region;
 5. Calls on the Government of Sudan to allow free and full access by humanitarian organisations such as the ICRC and UNICEF to the LRA camps to ascertain the identities of the abducted children and ensure their safe return to their home communities;
 6. Calls on the Government of Uganda to continue efforts to find a peaceful solution for the conflict in northern Uganda and to speed up the implementation of the Amnesty Act, despite its rejection by the LRA leader Joseph Kony;
 7. Calls on all parties involved in the conflict in Sudan to resume talks to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in southern Sudan;
 8. Calls on international oil companies working in Sudan, such as Talisman Energy Inc. of Canada, to halt their operations as long as abductions of children and slavery continue and a peaceful solution has not been found to the conflict; calls on EU companies to refrain from oil investments in Sudan and urges the EU Member States to exert their influence to this effect;
 9. Calls on the Council to assume a more active role in urging the implementation of the

Nairobi Peace Accord;

10. Calls on the Commission to support all efforts to rehabilitate and reintegrate the returning children and to support the affected communities in northern Uganda;
11. Calls on the Council to support initiatives that prohibit the use of child soldiers and urges the ratification of the Optional Protocol of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child setting 18 as the minimum age for the recruitment of soldiers;
12. Calls on individual EU Member States to ban LRA operations and travel by LRA representatives within the European Union and between EU Member States and non-EU countries;
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the ACP-EU Council, UNICEF, international oil companies working in Sudan, and the Governments of Uganda and Sudan.