

**Situation in the Horn of Africa**

**European Parliament resolution of 15 January 2009 on the situation in the Horn of Africa**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Horn of Africa countries,
  - having regard to the report of the mission to the Horn of Africa approved by its Committee on Development on 8 December 2008,
  - having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the unsolved border conflicts between Ethiopia and Eritrea and between Eritrea and Djibouti are negatively affecting peace and security in the Horn of Africa; whereas the situation in Somalia has deteriorated into one of the world's worst humanitarian and security crises; whereas the situation in Sudan is a major risk factor for security in the region,
- B. whereas Ethiopia and Eritrea ended their war by signing the internationally brokered 'Algiers Agreements' providing for a UN peace-keeping operation mission (UNMEE) and the setting-up of the Ethiopia-Eritrea Boundary Commission (EEBC), but there are still differences between the two sides regarding the implementation of the agreements and of the decision of the EEBC; whereas the mandate of the UNMEE had to be ended on 31 July 2008 as Eritrea was obstructing the mission and Ethiopia had refused to enforce the EEBC ruling in relation to the contested Badme area,
- C. whereas in June 2008 violence escalated on the border between Eritrea and Djibouti at Ras Doumeira, leaving 35 people dead and dozens wounded; whereas on 12 June 2008 the UN Security Council called on both sides to commit themselves to a ceasefire and to withdraw troops and restore the status quo ante; whereas the current situation is calm, but given the closeness of the troops there is a risk of escalation,
- D. whereas on 29 October 2008 suicide bomb attacks targeted the Ethiopian trade mission, a UN compound and the president's palace in Somaliland's capital Hargeysa, simultaneously with attacks in Bossaso in the Somali Region of Puntland, for which several individuals have been arrested,
- E. whereas a new round of negotiations in Djibouti took place in November 2008 leading to the signing of a power-sharing deal between representatives of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia and the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia-Djibouti (ARS-D) opposition, with both parties publicly announcing their support for a Commission of Inquiry to investigate human rights violations in Somalia,
- F. whereas the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), at a conference held on 29 October 2008 in Nairobi with representatives of the Transitional Federal Institutions and members of the Transitional Federal Parliament, adopted a seven-point plan for supporting the peace process in Somalia and established a mechanism for monitoring implementation,

- G. whereas since November 2008 Ethiopia has been progressively withdrawing its troops from Mogadishu and all other locations where they are still present in Somalia; whereas the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), which has since March 2007 been essentially confined to Mogadishu, will now find itself alone on the ground,
- H. whereas the TFG of Somalia has failed over four years to create a broad-based government; whereas as a result of President Abdullahi's recent resignation there is a real danger that rival factions may start fighting again,
- I. whereas piracy is another major security challenge for the Horn of Africa region; whereas the fight against piracy cannot be won only by military means, but depends mainly on success in promoting peace, development and state-building in Somalia; whereas as a result of piracy the World Food Programme (WFP) has had to suspend delivery of food aid to Somalia, worsening an already precarious humanitarian situation,
- J. whereas on 8 December 2008 the EU launched its maritime operation EU NAVFOR Somalia (or Operation Atalanta), aimed at protecting maritime convoys of the WFP and other merchant ships navigating in the waters off Somalia,
- K. whereas the failure of the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the north and south of Sudan could lead to secession, likely to be accompanied by military conflict over oil shares in the border region; whereas such a secession would most likely lead to a total break-up of the country, with Darfur and the eastern part seeking independence and interethnic fighting, further fuelled by involvement of neighbouring countries, including Eritrea,
- L. whereas Djibouti continues to face enormous challenges and its situation is becoming alarming in the wake of the world food crisis; whereas the Ogaden, the Somali region of Ethiopia, is suffering from severe drought and the government-controlled food aid intended for its inhabitants is failing to reach them, despite the recent progress in the delivery of food aid by the WFP in this region, given that delays are still being reported due to the need for military authorisation to travel in the Somali region,
- M. whereas the situation regarding human rights, the rule of law, democracy and governance in all countries of the Horn of Africa has been of great concern to the EU for many years; whereas there are credible reports of arbitrary arrests, forced labour, torture and maltreatment of prisoners, as well as persecution of journalists and political repression in the region,
- N. whereas the violations of human rights in Somalia include the kidnapping of two Italian Catholic nuns, Maria Teresa Olivero and Caterina Giraudo,
- O. whereas the majority voting system, highly unfavourable to the opposition parties, which was applied during the 2008 legislative elections, is a matter of concern in Djibouti, where the opposition Movement for Democratic Renewal (MRD) party was banned in July 2008 on the totally unsubstantiated grounds of supporting an Eritrean attack on Djibouti, while the leaders of the Union of Djibouti Workers/General Union of Djibouti Workers (UDT/UGTD) trade union have still not been reinstated in their jobs after being dismissed for reasons linked to their trade union activities,
- P. whereas there is a climate of fear among non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and

opposition circles that government control has been increasing and political freedom has been reduced by the recently adopted press law and party registration law in Ethiopia; whereas the law on NGOs (the Proclamation for the Registration and Regulation of Charities and Societies) adopted by the Ethiopian government and ratified by the parliament could seriously restrict the activities of the international and Ethiopian associations which are working for equality, justice, human rights and conflict resolution,

### ***Regional security***

1. Calls on the government of Ethiopia to formally endorse the EEBC's demarcation by map coordinates between Eritrea and Ethiopia as final and binding; calls on the Eritrean government to agree to a dialogue with Ethiopia, which would address the process of disengagement of troops from the border and physical demarcation in accordance with the EEBC's decision, as well as the normalisation of relations between the two countries, including reopening the border for trade; calls on the international community and the EU to put pressure on both sides to overcome the current impasse;
2. Calls on the Council to nominate an EU Special Representative/Envoy to the Horn of Africa region;
3. Calls on the Council and Commission to continue their efforts in the framework of the regional political partnership for peace, security and development in the Horn of Africa in order to identify projects of common interest which could trigger functional cooperation between Eritrea and Ethiopia, for instance in the areas of energy supply, cross-border trade and ports;
4. Calls on the Eritrean government to reconsider its current suspension of its membership of IGAD; calls on the African Union (AU) and IGAD leadership to continue to involve Eritrea and encourage the government to rejoin the regional and subregional cooperation efforts;
5. Calls on the Eritrean government to agree to invite, jointly with the Djibouti government, an independent fact-finding mission to look into the situation in Ras Doumeira; calls on both sides to rely on dialogue and diplomatic means in order to restore relations between the two countries;
6. Calls on the Council and Commission to continue their support for institution-building in Somalia, the implementation of the Djibouti peace agreement and the IGAD's efforts in the peace process; urges the reinforcement of AMISOM and the deployment of the UN stabilisation force in a timely manner as soon as political and security conditions allow;
7. Condemns the ever more frequent attacks on humanitarian workers over the last few months, which have gravely constrained aid operations and have helped worsen the humanitarian situation in Somalia; calls on the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia to negotiate humanitarian access separately from the Djibouti peace process, geographic area by geographic area, speed up food supplies and alleviate the dire humanitarian situation;
8. Stresses that in the wake of participation by the European Union and international community in achieving the north-south agreement in Sudan it is now essential to continue all efforts with a view to its implementation and to keep up the necessary pressure; calls on the Council and the international community, therefore, to step up their support for

implementation of the north-south Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan and to secure the full deployment of the UN-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID);

9. Calls on the Council and Commission to continue their support for IGAD and its efforts to develop an integration plan for the region, and to strengthen its institutions;

### ***Food security and development***

10. Calls on the Eritrean government to cooperate more closely with international organisations in the assessment of the food security situation, in order to allow for timely and targeted intervention;
11. Calls on the Eritrean government to allow the Commission unhindered access to the Commission-funded projects and to enhance its openness to technical assistance for jointly agreed projects and programmes; calls on it also to adapt the NGO Proclamation with a view to easing the financial requirements for NGOs willing to engage in development activities in Eritrea;
12. Calls on the Ethiopian government to grant full access for humanitarian organisations to the Ogaden region of Somalia, and to provide all necessary conditions to enable aid to reach its beneficiaries throughout the region;
13. Calls on the Commission to continue to support regional responses to cross-border challenges through the EU regional partnership for peace, security and development, and in particular the regional management of water resources as an essential element for food security;
14. Calls on the Commission to verify that none of its assistance programmes, including 'cash for work', are being implemented by forced labour;

### ***Human rights, democracy and governance***

15. Calls on the Eritrean government to make a public declaration as to the whereabouts of prisoners and their state of health and to either charge and immediately bring before a court of law all political detainees and imprisoned journalists or to unconditionally release them forthwith;
16. Calls on the Eritrean government to fully respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of association, freedom of expression, freedom of media and freedom of conscience;
17. Expresses its deep concern at the continuing imprisonment in Eritrea of the Swedish-Eritrean journalist Dawit Isaak, held in jail since his arrest in September 2001, without having been tried by a court of law, and demands the immediate release of Dawit Isaak and other imprisoned journalists;
18. Calls on the EU to reconsider its approach to Eritrea if no progress is made towards compliance with the essential elements of the Cotonou Agreement (Article 9), in particular on core human rights issues (access for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to prisons, release of the "G11" prisoners);
19. Calls on the Somali Transitional Federal Government to condemn the kidnapping of the two

Italian Catholic nuns and to take action to speed up their release and prevent further kidnappings;

20. Calls on the Djibouti authorities to protect the political rights of opposition parties and independent human rights organisations, including full guarantees of press freedom, freedom of assembly and freedom of expression; emphasises the need for a meaningful dialogue between government and opposition, leading to an adaptation of the electoral law so as to allow for a fairer representation of existing political parties in the parliament; calls on the Djibouti authorities to allow the MRD opposition party to resume activity and to reinstate all leaders of the UDT/UGTD trade union dismissed for reasons linked to their work for the trade union;
21. Calls on the government of Djibouti to take steps to ensure better protection in law and practice of the rights of trade unions in accordance with the respective International Labour Organisation (ILO) core conventions;
22. Regrets that the Ethiopian parliament has ratified the Proclamation for the Registration and Regulation of Charities and Societies; calls for significant adaptations to be made to guarantee basic human rights principles; calls for a non-restrictive implementation of this law, and insists on close monitoring of its implementation by the Commission;
23. Urges the Ethiopian authorities to review the press law and party registration law, as well as the composition of the Election Board, so as to ensure that the political rights of opposition parties are guaranteed; urges the Ethiopian authorities to investigate the allegations of harassment and arbitrary arrests affecting the opposition and civil society organisations and to bring those responsible to trial;
24. Is outraged at the imprisonment of Birtukan Midekssa, leader of the opposition party Unity for Democracy and Justice (UDJ), and demands her immediate and unconditional release;
25. Calls on the Ethiopian authorities to swiftly handle the request for registration by the Ethiopian National Teachers' Association (NTA), in accordance with the respective laws and rules, and to stop persecuting members of this association;
26. Calls on the governments of Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti and the Council, in accordance with Article 8 and Annex VII of the Revised Cotonou Agreement, to jointly agree to deepen the political dialogue on human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law, including the issues mentioned above, with a view to defining benchmarks and attaining tangible results and progress on the ground;
27. Recognises that elections are due to take place in Sudan in 2009, but notes that the amendment of the laws which restrict freedom of expression and organisation for individuals, political parties and the media, and which contravene the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the Interim National Constitution (INC), has not yet taken place, nor has a National Human Rights Commission been formed; stresses that repealing these laws and replacing them with legislation that is in line with the CPA and INC and the creation of the National Human Rights Commission are necessary preconditions for an environment in which free and fair elections can take place;

28. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Member States, the Chair of the African Union Commission, the Chair-in-Office of the African Union Assembly, the General Secretary of the African Union, the Pan-African Parliament, the Governments and Parliaments of the IGAD countries, and the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly.