

## **P7\_TA(2010)0017**

### **Situation in Yemen**

#### **European Parliament resolution of 10 February 2010 on the situation in Yemen**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the statement made by the chairman at the High-Level Meeting on Yemen of 27 January 2010,
  - having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions on Yemen of 25 January 2010 and 27 October 2009,
  - having regard to the declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union of 27 October 2009 on the deteriorating security situation in Yemen,
  - having regard to the European Community Strategy Paper for Yemen for the period 2007-2013,
  - having regard to the outcome of the visit by its Delegation for relations with the Gulf States, including Yemen, to Yemen from 22 to 25 February 2009,
  - having regard to the final report of the European Union election observation mission of 26 September 2006,
  - having regard to Rule 110(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the overall political, security and socio-economic situation in Yemen has been deteriorating for a long time, raising serious concerns in the international community,
- B. whereas al-Qa'ida's affiliate claimed responsibility for the failed attempt by the Nigerian terrorist Umar Farouk Abdulmuttab, who declared that he had been trained and equipped at a Yemeni al-Qa'ida camp, to blow up an aeroplane over Detroit in December 2009; whereas any further deterioration in the security situation in Yemen may offer terrorist and insurgent groups in the region, particularly al-Qa'ida, a safe haven in which to plan, organise and support subsequent terrorist operations,
- C. whereas the security situation is being worsened further by the civil war against Zaidi Shi'i revivalists in Sa'dah in the north of Yemen and the outbreak of violence by the secessionist movement in the south of the country,
- D. whereas terrorism had been rife in Yemen for many years before 11 September 2001, as demonstrated by the 12 October 2000 attack by al-Qa'ida on the USS Cole, and whereas since 2007 terrorism in Yemen has intensified, with many attacks on pipelines, oil facilities, government buildings, embassies (including those of Italy and the US), ships and tourists in the country,
- E. whereas the local fighting in the Sa'dah region took on a regional dimension when Saudi military forces engaged the rebels following an incursion on the Saudi-Yemen border and

launched raids on the rebel positions; whereas the Yemeni Government has alleged that external Shiite elements have been supporting rebel movements in the north of the country,

- F. whereas fighting between the Yemeni army and Shiite rebels in the northern province of Sa'dah, which started in 2004, has left more than 175 000 persons internally displaced and generated a humanitarian crisis in the area,
- G. whereas Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the world; whereas the 2008 food crisis has had a huge impact on the poorer sections of the Yemeni population, whilst the global financial crisis, particularly the fall in oil revenue, has contributed to unsustainable pressure on public finances, a situation further aggravated by the limited implementation of overdue economic and fiscal reforms,
- H. whereas Yemen's oil reserves, the source of over 75% of its income, are close to depletion, and whereas the country has few viable options for a sustainable post-oil economy,
- I. whereas another significant problem facing Yemen is the severe water shortage, which is caused by several factors, including rising domestic consumption, poor water management, corruption, a lack of resource management and wasteful irrigation techniques; whereas according to the government's estimates 99% of all water extraction is unlicensed,
- J. whereas the situation created by Yemen's lack of food and water is further complicated by the population's dependence on qat, a quick-cash crop which requires heavy irrigation to thrive and which is grown so extensively that about 40% of Yemeni water resources are used for its cultivation; whereas the country has now become a net food importer,
- K. whereas the increase in piracy in the Gulf of Aden and continuous migratory pressure from the Horn of Africa are further factors impacting on the stability of the country,
- L. whereas the 18-mile wide strait of Bab el Mandeb between Yemen and Djibouti is of significant strategic importance, with 3.3 million barrels of oil (4% of global daily production) passing through it every day,
- M. whereas since 2004 the EU has donated aid worth more than €144 million to Yemen, with the largest share going towards development, and has implemented programmes to support the Yemeni police and coastguard,
- N. whereas following the failed Detroit airline bombing the British and American governments have announced that they are to substantially increase their military and development aid to Yemen and have also undertaken jointly to finance a dedicated Yemeni anti-terror police unit and support the Yemeni coastguard,
- O. whereas the parliamentary elections which were to be held in April 2009 have been postponed to 2011 in order to enable the authorities to implement the essential reforms of the electoral system; whereas no concrete steps towards this goal have been taken so far,
- P. whereas serious concerns remain about developments in Yemen with regard to democracy, human rights and the independence of the judiciary; whereas there have been cases involving the persecution of journalists and human rights defenders; whereas the situation of women is especially difficult, with deteriorating access to education and a lack of active political participation,

- Q. whereas six European citizens - five Germans and one Briton - are still being held hostage following their kidnapping in June 2009, whilst three other people from that group were found dead immediately after their abduction,
1. Expresses its deep concern at the long-standing and worsening security, political and socio-economic problems in Yemen; calls for major efforts by the international community to prevent the escalation of the current crisis and move towards the goal of a unified, stable and democratic Yemen;
  2. Welcomes the outcome of the international meeting on Yemen that took place on 27 January 2010 in London, including the announcement by the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council that he will host a meeting of Gulf and other partners of Yemen in Riyadh on 22-23 February 2010, and the commitment by the Yemeni Government to continue its reform agenda and to initiate discussion of an IMF programme; welcomes, further, the commitment by the international community to support the Yemeni Government in the fight against al-Qa'ida and other forms of terrorism, whilst reiterating its support for a unified Yemen and its respect for the country's sovereignty and independence;
  3. Is convinced that security and stability in Yemen can only be achieved by means of political and socio-economic reforms; calls, therefore, on the Yemeni Government to honour the commitments it made to the international community and to step up the national political and economic reform process with the aim of deepening democracy and improving people's living conditions;
  4. Welcomes and supports the active cooperation between the Commission, the Council and the Yemeni Government, especially in the areas of development, police, justice, border control, anti-trafficking, maritime safety, counter-terrorism and institution building; calls on the Council and the Commission further to strengthen bilateral relations with Yemen and to examine the most effective ways in which the EU can contribute to improving the security and political situation in the country;
  5. Reiterates its call for an immediate ceasefire in Sa'dah and for a halt to the violence in southern Yemen and expresses its view that only a comprehensive political solution can bring lasting peace; voices grave concern at the deteriorating humanitarian situation in northern Yemen; calls on all parties to meet their obligations and responsibilities under international humanitarian law to protect the civilian population in the area and allow humanitarian aid and assistance to reach the areas concerned;
  6. Calls on the Yemeni Government to refrain from discrimination against any ethnic or religious groups in the country and to take account of the common interest of all its citizens in its policies; stresses that anti-terrorist actions and measures must not be misused for political purposes, especially against political opponents, journalists and human rights defenders;
  7. Expresses its concern at the long-standing and growing presence of al-Qa'ida in Yemen and emphasises that a lack of concrete action could lead to a further erosion of central government authority and destabilisation of Yemen, and its neighbourhood, to the degree seen in Somalia, which will in turn provide opportunities for extremists directed or inspired by al-Qa'ida to regroup, organise, train, and launch terrorist operations inside or outside Yemeni territory;

8. Calls on the Yemeni authorities to implement the reforms needed in order to improve the human rights situation in the country, in particular by guaranteeing media freedom, the right to a fair trial and equal treatment for men and women;
9. Stresses the importance of an independent judiciary with the resources and competence to address accountability for human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests and torture; urges the Yemeni Government to ensure that impartial humanitarian agencies have access to all places of detention in Yemen and end the use of private or unauthorised detention sites;
10. Encourages all political forces in Yemen to overcome the current deadlock in the negotiations on essential political reforms; emphasises the importance of holding elections in 2011 and encourages all political parties to implement their agreements setting out the measures required to improve the electoral system and deepen democracy, in particular taking into account the recommendations made by the EU Election Observation Mission following the democratic 2006 presidential and local elections; calls on the Commission and the Council, in close cooperation with Parliament, to monitor the process of constitutional and electoral law reform which has led to the postponement of the parliamentary elections;
11. Calls on the Council and the Commission, and, after its establishment, the European External Action Service, quickly to implement a coordinated and comprehensive EU approach towards Yemen, in order to avoid duplication and overlapping among Member States' assistance and development aid; points out that EU coordination is vital in order to achieve global donor coordination in Yemen, which is severely lacking;
12. Calls on the Council and Commission to provide, in cooperation with other international actors, increased development assistance to Yemen with the aim of stabilising the political situation and improving the economic situation and the living conditions of the people in the country; calls, in particular, for consideration to be given to exceptional assistance measures in the context of the Stability Instrument and a specific programme to enhance education under the Development Cooperation Instrument; welcomes the readiness of the Gulf Cooperation Council to further develop its relations with Yemen; calls on the Yemeni Government to ensure, in close cooperation with the donors, enhanced aid effectiveness through appropriate coordination, distribution and implementation mechanisms;
13. Calls on the Commission and the Council to ensure that the aid supplied by the international community, and in particular from the European Union's budget, is used to support projects which directly benefit as many people as possible and whose effectiveness can be evaluated on the spot; welcomes, in this regard, the establishment of a fully-fledged EU-delegation in Sana'a;
14. Calls on the Commission and the Council to implement a special programme of assistance for Yemen, involving training for Yemeni officials based on EUJUST LEX experiences and the placement of trainers in the Yemeni central and local administrations, in a way that strengthens or complements other international efforts;
15. Calls on the Council and Commission to assist the United States and Yemen in repatriating or resettling Yemenis held without charge at Guantanamo, including the 40 Yemenis that the US Administration has already cleared for release;
16. Calls on the Yemeni authorities to step up their efforts to ensure the release of the six European hostages being held on its territory;

17. Asks the Council and the Commission to keep it fully and immediately informed at all stages of the procedure of all developments and negotiations, as provided for by Article 218 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Government and Parliament of the Republic of Yemen.