

P7_TA(2014)0171

Situation in Iraq

European Parliament resolution of 27 February 2014 on the situation in Iraq (2014/2565(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Iraq, in particular that of 10 October 2013 on recent violence in Iraq¹,
 - having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Iraq, of the other part, and to its resolution of 17 January 2013 on the EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement²,
 - having regard to the Commission's EU Joint Strategy Paper for Iraq 2011-2013,
 - having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on Iraq, in particular those of 10 February 2014,
 - having regard to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR), Catherine Ashton, on Iraq, in particular those of 5 February 2014, 16 January 2014, 18 December 2013 and 5 September 2013,
 - having regard to the statement by the spokesperson for the VP/HR of 28 December 2013 on the killing of residents at Camp Hurriya,
 - having regard to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Presidential Statement on Iraq of 10 January 2014,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, to which Iraq is a party,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Iraq continues to face serious political, security and socioeconomic challenges, and whereas its political scene is extremely fragmented and plagued by violence and sectarian politics, to the severe detriment of the Iraqi people's legitimate aspirations for peace, prosperity and a genuine transition to democracy; whereas Iraq is facing the most severe wave of violence since 2008;
- B. whereas even though Iraq has been able to restore its oil productivity almost to full capacity, social inequality is growing as the Iraqi state continues to be unable to provide basic

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0424.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0022.

services to the Iraqi population, such as regular electricity in the summer, clean water and public health care;

- C. whereas according to casualty figures released by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) on 1 February 2014, a total of 733 Iraqis were killed and another 1 229 wounded in acts of terrorism and violence in January 2014; whereas the figures for January 2014 do not include casualties resulting from the ongoing fighting in Anbar province, owing to problems with verification and with ascertaining the status of those killed or injured;
- D. whereas the ongoing civil war in Syria has exacerbated the situation in Iraq; whereas it is spilling over into Iraq, with militants – in particular those of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) – extending their activities into Iraqi territory;
- E. whereas on 10 January 2014 the UNSC condemned the attacks being perpetrated by the ISIL against the people of Iraq in an attempt to destabilise the country and the region;
- F. whereas the government of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki has not addressed the concerns of the Sunni minority; whereas the de-Baathification policy pursuant to the Justice and Accountability Law has led to the dismissal of predominantly Sunni officials, which has reinforced the perception of the government's sectarian agenda; whereas, in particular, the demolition of the year-long Sunni protest camp in Ramadi by the government on 30 December 2013 precipitated the violent confrontation in Anbar province; whereas, as a result, Fallujah and other cities in Anbar province have seen fighting between government forces and ISIL militants since December 2013;
- G. whereas on 13 February 2014 more than 63 000 families (amounting to more than 370 000 people, according to UN calculations) affected by the fighting in Anbar province were registered as internally displaced; whereas many have fled to other parts of the country, including Karbala, Baghdad and Erbil provinces, while others have sought safety in outlying communities in Anbar province or are unable to flee the fighting; whereas their condition remains precarious, with food stocks and potable water running low, poor sanitation and limited access to health care;
- H. whereas deadly bomb attacks across Iraq – such as the attack of 5 February 2014 on the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs – continue unabated, mainly striking Shia neighbourhoods, while several prison breaks have increased the number of fighters filling up the ranks of extremist militant groups;
- I. whereas on 25 December 2013 at least 35 people were killed and dozens more wounded in bomb attacks in Christian areas of Baghdad; whereas since 2003 at least half of Iraq's Christians are believed to have left the country;
- J. whereas on 5 February 2014 the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Baghdad was attacked, and whereas on 10 February 2014 the convoy of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Osama al-Nujaifi, was attacked in the city of Mosul in Ninawa province;
- K. whereas disagreement between Iraq's federal government and the Kurdistan Regional Government continues over how to share the use of Iraq's mineral resources, with a new pipeline expected to transport 2 million barrels of oil every month from Kurdistan to Turkey and the central government preparing legal action against the province;

- L. whereas serious social and economic problems – widespread poverty, high unemployment, economic stagnation, environmental degradation and a lack of basic public services – continue to affect a large proportion of the population;
- M. whereas violence and sabotage have hindered efforts to revive an economy shattered by decades of conflict and sanctions; whereas Iraq has the world’s third-largest crude oil reserves, but whereas attacks, corruption and smuggling have crippled exports; whereas the country’s social fabric, including its former level of equality for women, has been severely upset;
- N. whereas press and media freedom has repeatedly and increasingly come under attack from both the government and extremist groups; whereas journalists and news outlets have been attacked or censored and Reporters Without Borders has reported a news blackout on the situation in Anbar province; whereas Iraq is rated as ‘not free’ by the Freedom House 2014 Freedom in the World report;
- O. whereas the Iraqi constitution guarantees equality before the law for all citizens, along with the ‘administrative, political, cultural and educational rights of the various nationalities’;
- P. whereas the EU-Iraq PCA, in particular its human rights clause, emphasises that the EU-Iraq political dialogue should focus on human rights and strengthening democratic institutions;
- Q. whereas amendments to Iraq’s electoral law were passed in November 2013, paving the way for the general elections due to take place on 30 April 2014;
- R. whereas the EU has reaffirmed its commitment to assisting Iraq in its transition to democracy, recalling that the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq are essential elements in building a secure and prosperous state for all its citizens and bringing stability to the whole region;
- S. whereas the Cooperation Council between the EU and the Republic of Iraq held its first meeting in Brussels on 20 January 2014; whereas the Cooperation Council, which is meeting within the framework of the EU-Iraq PCA, reaffirmed the commitment of both parties to continuing to strengthen their relations; whereas the EU will continue to advance cooperation in all fields of mutual interest, providing targeted assistance in jointly agreed areas;
- T. whereas the Iraqi authorities continue to apply the death penalty; whereas the EU Heads of Mission in Baghdad co-signed a statement on the World Day Against the Death Penalty in October 2013, which expressed deep concern at Iraq’s use of the death penalty and called on the Government of Iraq to introduce a moratorium;
- U. whereas a massive arming campaign for Iraq is ongoing, involving large-scale sales of military equipment;
- 1. Strongly condemns the recent acts of terrorism and heightened sectarian violence, which carries the danger that the country will fall back into sectarian strife and is generating fears of wider sectarian conflict across the region; points out that although violence occurs along sectarian lines, its causes are political rather than religious; extends its condolences to the families and friends of the deceased and injured;

2. Strongly condemns the ISIL attacks in Anbar province and supports the UNSC's call on the people of Iraq, including Iraqi tribes, local leaders, and Iraqi security forces in Anbar province, to cooperate in combating violence and terror; stresses that the ISIL is subject to the arms embargo and assets freeze imposed by UNSC resolutions 1267 (1999) and 2083 (2012) and underlines the importance of prompt and effective implementation of those measures;
3. Is deeply concerned about the developments in Anbar province and the large numbers of internally displaced persons fleeing the conflict zones; calls for humanitarian access to Fallujah; calls on the Government of Iraq to honour its duty to protect the civilian population in Fallujah and elsewhere; encourages the Government of Iraq to continue to work with UNAMI and humanitarian agencies to ensure the delivery of humanitarian relief; welcomes the UN's efforts to provide aid to those affected by the fighting in Anbar province, despite the challenges posed by the deteriorating security environment and ongoing operations in the province;
4. Calls on the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Commission to support all the efforts of the Iraqi Government and UNAMI in protecting the civilian population in Fallujah and elsewhere so as to try to ensure the safe passage of civilians trapped in conflict areas and the safe return of internally displaced persons as conditions allow;
5. Calls on the Iraqi Government to address the long-term issues contributing to the country's instability, including the legitimate concerns of the Sunni minority, by launching an inclusive national dialogue on the reform of the Justice and Accountability Law, refraining from inflammatory sectarian statements and implementing measures aimed at national reconciliation; rejects calls for the establishment of a Sunni federal region in Iraq as a solution to the current conflict, as this is likely to lead to more sectarianism and violence;
6. Notes with concern the spill-over of violence from the conflict in Syria; calls on the Iraqi Government to make a strong effort to insulate Iraq from the Syrian civil war by refraining from supporting any party involved in the conflict and by preventing fighters, both Sunni and Shiite, from crossing from or into Syria;
7. Is deeply concerned about the continuing acts of violence perpetrated against the civilian population, vulnerable groups and religious communities; calls on the Iraqi Government and on all political leaders to take the necessary measures to provide security and protection for all people in Iraq, in particular members of vulnerable groups such as women, journalists, young people, fundamental rights activists, trade unionists and religious communities, including Christians; calls on the Iraqi Government to ensure that the security forces comply with the rule of law and international standards;
8. Supports the EU's efforts to assist Iraq in promoting democracy, human rights, good governance and the rule of law, including by building on the experiences and achievements of the EUJUST LEX-Iraq mission, which – regrettably – completed its mandate on 31 December 2013, along with the efforts of UNAMI and of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to assist the Government of Iraq in strengthening its democratic institutions and processes, promoting the rule of law, facilitating regional dialogue, improving the provision of basic services and ensuring the protection of human rights; welcomes the capacity-building programme launched on 22 January 2014 – funded by the EU and implemented by the UN Office for Project Services – to support the Iraqi High

Commission for Human Rights in implementing its mandate to promote and protect human rights in Iraq;

9. Welcomes the passing of amendments to Iraq's electoral law on 4 November 2013, which has paved the way for the general elections due to take place on 30 April 2014; highlights the importance of these elections for Iraq's continued democratic transition and calls on all actors to ensure that they are inclusive, transparent, credible and held on time; calls on the EEAS to assist the Iraqi Government as much as possible with the practical preparations;
10. Is deeply concerned about the high rate of executions in Iraq; calls on the Iraqi authorities to introduce a moratorium on the implementation of all death sentences; believes that a reform of the justice system is of primary importance in order to re-establish a sense of security among the citizens of Iraq, and should include the revision of the Anti-Terrorism Law, which provides significantly fewer protections for suspects and detainees than the Code of Criminal Procedure, and calls for an end to impunity, in particular for state security forces;
11. Calls on all state and non-state actors to respect the freedom of the press and media and to protect journalists and news outlets from violence; recognises that a free press and media is an essential part of a functioning democracy, providing access to information and a platform for citizens;
12. Calls for the EU to develop a common position in favour of prohibiting the use of depleted uranium munitions and to offer support for the treatment of victims, including victims of chemical weapons, and for possible efforts to decontaminate affected areas;
13. Considers that the recent talks between the E3+3 and Iran also afford an opportunity for Iraq to stabilise, provided that all neighbouring powers cease to interfere in Iraqi internal affairs;
14. Strongly condemns the rocket attack at Camp Hurriya on 26 December 2013, which according to various reports claimed the lives of several camp residents and left people injured; stresses that the circumstances in which this brutal incident took place must be clarified; calls on the Iraqi authorities to step up security measures around the camp so as to protect its residents from any further violence; urges the Iraqi Government to find the perpetrators of the attack and hold them accountable; notes that the EU invites all parties to facilitate the work of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in relocating all Camp Hurriya residents to a permanent and safe location outside Iraq as soon as possible;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Council of Representatives of Iraq, the Regional Government of Kurdistan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the United Nations Human Rights Council.