



TEXTS ADOPTED

P8_TA(2014)0066

Iraq: kidnapping and mistreatment of women

European Parliament resolution of 27 November 2014 on Iraq: kidnapping and mistreatment of women (2014/2971(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Iraq,
- having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on the ISIL/Da'esh crisis in Syria and Iraq of 20 October 2014,
- having regard to UN Human Rights Council resolution S-22/1 of 1 September 2014 on the human rights situation in Iraq in the light of abuses committed by the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and associated groups,
- having regard to the UN Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, entitled 'Rule of Terror: Living under ISIS in Syria', of 14 November 2014,
- 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 Agreement¹,
- having regard to UN Security Council resolution 2106 (2013) of 24 June 2013 on sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations,
- 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,

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0022.

- having regard to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), to which Iraq is a signatory, and to UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000),
 - having regard to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the so-called Islamic State (IS) has committed numerous atrocities, which amount to crimes against humanity, involving mass killings, executions ordered by self-appointed IS courts, the imposition of a harsh interpretation of Shariah law, sexual violence against women and children, enslavement, rape, forced marriages, human trafficking, displacement and abduction, and which have caused a catastrophic humanitarian crisis and the displacement of large numbers of people from the areas under their control;
 - B. whereas in August 2014 IS fighters pushed further into northern Iraq, overwhelming Kurdish Peshmerga forces that had moved into areas abandoned by the Iraqi army; whereas the town of Sinjar was overrun, the strategically important Mosul dam, which supplies water and electricity to large parts of Iraq, was seized and the IS fighters came within 40 kilometres of Irbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan; whereas many Kurdish women are fighting in Kobani, including women who are members and leaders of PKK forces;
 - C. whereas members of ethnic and religious minorities, in particular Christians and Yazidis, Turkmens, Shabaks, Kaka'e, Sabaeans and Shi'a communities, as well as many Arabs and Sunni Muslims, have been targeted by IS in Mosul and surrounding areas, including Sinjar and Tal Afar;
 - D. whereas Human Rights Watch estimates that 3 133 Yazidis have been kidnapped and killed by IS, or have been missing since the IS assaults of early August; whereas this list includes 2 305 people believed to have been abducted, of whom 412 are children; whereas IS is indoctrinating captured Yazidi children;
 - E. whereas in October 2014 UN researchers stated that an estimated 5 000 to 7 000 women were also being held in makeshift detention centres, from which they were being taken away and either sold into servitude or handed to jihadists as concubines; whereas the town of Tal Afar alone is thought to hold around 3 500 women and children in five detention centres;
 - F. whereas IS and other jihadist extremists in Iraq and Syria have caused refugee flows to fill refugee camps in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, where women and girls in particular are experiencing tough humanitarian conditions and are extremely vulnerable to harassment, sexual violence, forced marriage and other abuses;
 - G. whereas the transnational character of IS and associated terrorist groups is a matter of global concern;
 - H. whereas the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) is deeply concerned about the ability of the international community to meet urgent winter needs in Iraq, in particular for the recently displaced;
 - I. whereas Iraq's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity are essential for stability and economic development in the country and the region;

1. Condemns in the strongest possible terms the systematic human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law resulting from the acts committed by IS and associated terrorist groups, which amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity; strongly condemns in particular all violence against persons based on their religious and ethnic affiliation, and violence against women and children;
2. Strongly condemns the numerous atrocities committed by IS, targeting specifically women, which amount to crimes against humanity, such as abductions, rape and other forms of sexual violence, enslavement, and forced marriages and conversions; stresses the need for those responsible for such violations of human rights and international humanitarian law to be held to account;
3. Emphasises that children should be immediately reunited with their families, forced marriages and sexual abuse brought to an end, and all civilian detainees, notably women, held by IS released immediately;
4. Calls on the Iraqi Government to ratify the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court (ICC) in order to allow the ICC to prosecute the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by IS;
5. Calls on the Iraqi Government to promote and protect human rights by involving all components of Iraqi society in a spirit of national unity and reconciliation and upholding human rights and international humanitarian law in its efforts to confront IS; offers its support in helping the government build a fairer, more inclusive society, including one which protects and promotes the rights of women;
6. Welcomes the efforts of the international community, notably the US, to support the Iraqi national and local authorities in their fight against IS, to stop the advance of IS and to facilitate access for humanitarian support; supports the global coalition against IS and its efforts to combat it, including by military means; urges the international community to deliver the necessary life-saving assistance for people in Iraq over the winter, including the Yazidi families who are still on Mount Sinjar defending their temples against destruction by IS;
7. Calls on all regional actors to do everything within their power to stop all activities by official or private bodies aimed at propagating and spreading extreme Islamist ideologies in words and acts; calls on the international community, especially the EU, to facilitate a regional dialogue on the problems facing the Middle East and to include all significant parties, in particular Iran and Saudi Arabia;
8. Urges the UN, in particular its Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Rashida Manjoo, to do its utmost to trace the victims, and to investigate and establish the facts and circumstances of abuses and violations against girls and women committed by IS and associated terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria, with a view to avoiding impunity and ensuring full accountability; supports the work of the UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura;
9. Calls on the international humanitarian agencies working in Iraq, including UN agencies, to increase medical and counselling services for displaced people who have fled the IS advances, paying special attention to the needs of survivors of sexual violence and children;

10. Reiterates its call on the Commission, the European External Action Service and the Member States to take specific measures to address the situation of women in Iraq and guarantee their freedom and respect for their most fundamental rights, and to adopt measures to prevent the exploitation of, and abuse and violence against, women and children; is particularly concerned at the increase in all forms of violence against Yazidi women, who are imprisoned, raped, sexually abused and sold by the members of IS; calls, in particular, on the Member States to enhance policies in such a way as to meet the needs of survivors and to establish a mechanism to enable traumatised women from Syria and Iraq, notably Yazidi women, to receive special post-traumatic counselling tailored to their needs;
11. Is convinced that immediate humanitarian assistance and protection needs to be complemented by long-term strategies in support of the socioeconomic rights and livelihood opportunities of returnee, internally displaced and refugee women, enhanced leadership and participation, with a view to empowering them to choose durable solutions that suit their needs; considers that there is a need to address the specific risks and particular needs of different groups of women who are subjected to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination;
12. Condemns the fact that, with the advance of IS, acts of violence and murder against LGBT Iraqis have been taking place with total impunity; notes that, while LGBT Iraqis are not the only group at risk in the current crisis and conflict, they find themselves in an extremely vulnerable situation, given the limited family and community support and government protection available to them; notes that LGBT Iraqis remain marginalised and at risk in refugee communities or in certain host societies; calls on the Iraqi Government to provide protection for LGBT Iraqis;
13. Regrets that, as a consequence of the years of dictatorship and conflict, the lives of Iraqi women have significantly deteriorated; calls for the promotion and implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security in order to ensure the participation of women in conflict resolution and democracy building; insists that without women's participation in decision making there will be no real protection, nor any real security, for women in Iraq;
14. Calls for a concerted international effort, in close cooperation with Muslim countries, organisations and communities, to challenge the radical Salafi/Wahhabi ideology that underpins and inspires the actions of IS and associated terrorist organisations and is becoming a growing security threat for the Member States; calls on the EEAS and the Member States, in their dialogue with the Gulf countries, to raise strong concerns about the ongoing Salafi/Wahhabi indoctrination efforts in many Muslim-majority countries and Muslim communities worldwide by actors from these countries;
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.