



TEXTS ADOPTED

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Nigeria

European Parliament resolution of 14 April 2016 on Nigeria (2016/2649(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Nigeria,
- having regard to President Muhammadu Buhari's address to the European Parliament of 3 February 2016,
- having regard to the previous statements of the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) on the situation in Nigeria,
- having regard to the Council conclusions on the situation in Nigeria, including those of 9 February 2015,
- having regard to the previous statements of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the situation in Nigeria,
- having regard to the previous statements of the United Nations Security Council on the situation in Nigeria,
- having regard to the statements of the VP/HR and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria at the sixth Nigeria-EU ministerial dialogue, held in Brussels on 15 March 2016,
- having regard to the Council decision to add Boko Haram to the EU list of designated terrorist organisations, which entered into force on 29 May 2014,
- having regard to the second revision of the Cotonou Agreement 2007-2013, ratified by Nigeria on 27 September 2010,
- having regard to the Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1979,

- having regard to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion and Belief of 1981,
 - having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 1981, ratified by Nigeria on 22 June 1983,
 - having regard to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in particular its provisions on the protection of freedom of religion in Chapter IV – Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,
 - having regard to the outcome of the Nigerian presidential elections of March 2015,
 - having regard to the report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on violations and abuses committed by Boko Haram and the impact on human rights in the affected countries, of 29 September 2015,
 - having regard to the UN Sustainable Development Goals adopted in September 2015,
 - having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Nigeria on 16 April 1991,
 - having regard to the Amnesty International report 'Nigeria: Still waiting for justice, still waiting for change. Government must prioritise accountability in the north-east',
 - having regard to the Human Rights Watch report of January 2016 on Nigeria,
 - having regard to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, with its vast resources, Nigeria is the largest economy in Africa and its most populous and culturally diverse nation; whereas it plays a key role in regional and African politics and is a driving force of regional integration through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); whereas, however, it ranks among the most unequal countries in the world, with widespread corruption contributing significantly to economic and social disparity, and with its security threatened by the violent extremist group Boko Haram;
- B. whereas years of military dictatorship, corruption, political instability and poor governance have led to insufficient investment in the country's infrastructure, education and social services, and whereas this continues to undermine social and economic rights in Nigeria;
- C. whereas more than six out of 10 Nigerians live on less than USD 2 a day; whereas this extreme poverty is even more acute in the northern states, which are the least developed in the country; whereas this poverty contributes directly to a social divide, religious hostility and regional division; whereas Nigeria's Gini index has dramatically increased and reached 48.8 in 2010;
- D. whereas the organisation Transparency International ranked Nigeria 136th out of 175 countries in its 2015 Corruption Perceptions Index; whereas, by some estimates, between USD 3 billion and 8 billion of Nigerian oil is stolen annually;
- E. whereas, despite the peaceful transition to power of President Buhari in March 2015, peace and stability in Nigeria have been threatened by a wave of attacks, killings and

kidnappings by the violent extremist group Boko Haram, a flagging economy caused by low global oil prices, weak political institutions, a failure to tackle corruption and unresolved conflicts in the Niger Delta and in the Middle Belt;

- F. whereas Boko Haram killed at least 8 200 civilians in 2014 and 2015; whereas it is estimated that more than 2,6 million people have been displaced and more than 14,8 million affected by the Boko Haram insurgency;
- G. whereas terrorism is a global threat, but the global community's ability to cooperate with the Nigerian authorities in fighting Boko Haram depends on the full measure of credibility, accountability and transparency of the new administration; whereas the government's failure to stamp out impunity for war crimes at the highest level remains one of the major issues in this country; whereas President Buhari has promised to initiate investigations into these matters;
- H. whereas Boko Haram aims to establish a fully Islamic state in Nigeria, including the implementation of Sharia criminal courts across the country, and to forbid Western education; whereas Boko Haram has abducted women and girls to engage in suicide attacks; whereas recent suicide bomb attacks, including those on 16 March, 11 February and 31 January 2016 in north-east Nigeria, have resulted in scores of deaths;
- I. whereas sexual and gender violence, and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people, is still rife in the troubled regions of north-eastern Nigeria, and whereas fundamental rights such as education for young girls and women, social justice and fair distribution of state revenues in society are dramatically worsening, as is the fight against corruption;
- J. whereas around 270 schoolgirls were abducted by Boko Haram on 14-15 April 2014 from a school in Chibok, north-east Nigeria, and whereas the majority are still missing; whereas their exact fate remains a mystery, though it is feared that most were forced to either marry insurgents or to become insurgents themselves, subjected to sexual violence or sold into slavery, and non-Muslim girls were forced to convert to Islam; whereas Boko Haram has abducted more than 2 000 women and girls since 2009, including around 400 from Damasak in Borno state on 24 November 2014;
- K. whereas the Nigerian military announced on 6 April 2016 that at least 800 fighters had surrendered in the three weeks before; whereas Nigerian troops have rescued 11 595 hostages during raids on Boko Haram territory in the mountainous region between Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon since 26 February 2016;
- L. whereas the plight of the abducted schoolgirls has exposed wider problems, including regular attacks on schools, a lack of teachers and the urgent need for international funding to repair and rebuild shattered buildings; whereas the lack of educational opportunities means that some children have not been schooled for many years;
- M. whereas Boko Haram's violent extremism is indiscriminate and has caused immense suffering to people of all faiths and ethnicities in its wave of violence; whereas in the last year there has reportedly been an increase in the number of Christians killed in northern Nigeria;

- N. whereas the Middle Belt region has suffered from years of economic and political tension between ethnic and religious communities, with the recent violence fuelled by competition for power and access to land between nomadic and farming communities;
- O. whereas the oil and gas sectors remain the main sources of revenue in Nigeria, though the division of the benefits of the country's economic wealth is highly unequal; whereas levels of poverty and unemployment in northern Nigeria are considerably higher than in the oil-rich south; whereas, according to the World Bank, Nigeria has lost an estimated USD 400 billion in oil revenue as a result of corruption since 1960, and whereas a further USD 20 billion in oil money has disappeared from Nigeria's Treasury in the past two years;
- P. whereas a special investigation panel was created by the President's office to investigate allegations of human rights abuses by security forces, including killings, torture and enforced disappearances;
- Q. whereas proposed legislation is currently before the Nigerian Senate aimed at punishing the dissemination of 'abusive statements' via social media or criticism of the government or others via print and electronic media;
1. Welcomes the peaceful transition of power in Nigeria following the presidential elections, and is encouraged by the high expectations surrounding the ambitious reform programme of President Buhari and his government;
 2. Is deeply concerned by the significant social, economic, political and security challenges facing Nigeria, and regrets the lack of real progress in addressing the corruption which has blighted Nigerian society for decades;
 3. Recognises that Nigeria has the potential to be an economic and political powerhouse in Africa, but that its development has been held back by poor economic governance, weak democratic institutions and massive inequality; further calls for the European Union and its Member States to fulfil their commitment to providing a comprehensive range of political, development and humanitarian assistance to support programmes at all levels of government that address poverty, youth unemployment and women's lack of empowerment;
 4. Believes that the fight against corruption must be led by the Nigerian authorities, and believes that a failure to do so would mean more years of poverty, inequality, reputational damage, reduced external investment and an undermining of young people's life opportunities; further offers its support in achieving this objective and in seeking to break the link between corrupt practices and terrorism;
 5. Commends the efforts made by the Buhari government to reinforce its anti-corruption credentials and in mandating that all government financial transactions pass through a single bank account in order to monitor spending; calls for the EU and its Member States to take concrete measures to effectively curb illicit financial flows and tax evasion and avoidance, and to boost democratic international cooperation in tax matters;
 6. Expresses solidarity with the people of Nigeria who are suffering from the acts of terrorism perpetrated by Boko Haram, which have led to thousands of deaths and displaced more than two million people; urges the Nigerian Government to take all necessary measures to ensure the protection of its civilians in accordance with its regional

and international human rights obligations, including by launching comprehensive, independent and effective investigations into such crimes;

7. Strongly condemns the recent violence and attacks by Boko Haram, and calls on the Federal Government to protect its population and address the root causes of the violence by ensuring equal rights for all citizens, including by addressing the issues of inequality, control of fertile farmlands, unemployment and poverty; rejects any violent retaliation in breach of humanitarian law perpetrated by the Nigerian military; welcomes, however, the Nigerian Army's 'Safe Corridor' programme designed to rehabilitate Boko Haram fighters;
8. Deplores the massacre of innocent women, men and children, the acts of rape and torture, and the recruitment of child soldiers, and stands with the people of Nigeria in their determination to fight all forms of violence in their country;
9. Calls on the Nigerian Government to develop a comprehensive strategy that addresses the root causes of terrorism, and to investigate, as promised, evidence that the Nigerian military might have committed human rights violations; welcomes the Abuja Security Summit, to take place in May 2016, and calls on all stakeholders to identify concrete, viable solutions to fight terrorism without sacrificing respect for human rights and democracy; further underlines the importance of regional cooperation in addressing the threat posed by Boko Haram;
10. Calls for an international investigation, under the auspices of the UN, to determine the responsibility of third countries in the organisation and financing of terrorist groups in the region, such as Boko Haram;
11. Believes that the second anniversary of the abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls on 14 April should provide fresh impetus for the Nigerian Government and international community to secure their immediate and unconditional release, as well as the release of the 400 women and children abducted from the town of Damasak in November 2014, and all other abducted women and children;
12. Appeals to the authorities to ensure ease of access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls;
13. Notes with concern the attacks on schools in northern Nigeria, which are denying children educational opportunities and risk fuelling the radicalisation on which violent extremist groups such as Boko Haram depend;
14. Notes that Boko Haram has attacked Muslims, Christians, followers of other religions and people of no faith without distinction, and condemns the surge in violence, including the targeting of religious institutions and worshippers;
15. Further condemns the attacks on farmers and the inter-ethnic conflicts between cattle herders and farmers in the Middle Belt area, in particular in the states of Plateau and Taraba, which have been marked by serious human rights violations and have killed thousands since 2014;
16. Calls on the Nigerian Government and international partners to increase investment in preventing and resolving intercommunal conflicts between cattle herders and farmers by supporting cooperation through shared economic and natural resource management initiatives;

17. Calls on President Buhari to ensure that his government defends Nigerians' right to worship freely, and the rights of all its citizens more widely, in line with the country's laws and Constitution, and asks Nigeria's religious leaders to help combat extremism and radicalisation;
18. Urges the VP/HR and the Member States to remain committed to their diplomatic efforts in Nigeria, in order to achieve peace, security, good governance and respect for human rights; urges them, in particular, to continue political dialogue with Nigeria under Article 8 of the revised Cotonou Agreement and, in that context, to address issues relating to universal human rights, including freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, and non-discrimination on any grounds, as enshrined in universal, regional and national human rights instruments;
19. Requests that the Nigerian authorities reject the bill to prohibit frivolous petitions and other matters connected therewith, which is currently before the Nigerian Senate, as it undermines press freedom and freedom of expression in Nigeria;
20. Calls on the Nigerian Government and regional authorities to stop criminalising the Nigerian LGBTI community and to guarantee their right to freedom of expression;
21. Calls on the Nigerian Government to take emergency measures in the Niger Delta, including actions to end illegal oil-related activities;
22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Chairman of the African Union, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the Pan-African Parliament and representatives of ECOWAS.