



TEXTS ADOPTED

P8_TA(2017)0264

Situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

European Parliament resolution of 14 June 2017 on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2017/2703(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions, in particular those on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) of 23 June 2016¹, 1 December 2016² and 2 February 2017³,
- having regard to the statements by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission Federica Mogherini and by her Spokesperson on the situation in the DRC,
- having regard to the statements by the EU Delegation to the DRC on the situation of human rights in the country,
- having regard to the political agreement reached in the DRC on 31 December 2016,
- having regard to the resolution of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly of 15 June 2016 on the pre-electoral and security situation in the DRC,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 17 October 2016 and 6 March 2017 on the DRC,
- having regard to the report of the UN Secretary-General of 10 March 2017 on the UN Stabilisation Mission in the DRC,
- having regard to the UN Security Council resolutions on the DRC, in particular resolution 2293 (2016) on renewing the DRC sanctions regime and the mandate of the Group of Experts, and resolution 2348 (2017) on renewing the mandate of the UN Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO),
- having regard to the joint statement on the DRC by the African Union, the United Nations, the European Union and the International Organisation of La Francophonie of

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0290.

² Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0479.

³ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0017.

16 February 2017,

- having regard to the revised Cotonou Partnership Agreement,
 - having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of June 1981,
 - having regard to the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance,
 - having regard to the Constitution of the DRC, adopted on 18 February 2006,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the DRC has suffered from continuous cycles of conflict and brutal political repression; whereas the humanitarian and security crisis in the DRC has further deteriorated as a result of the political crisis caused by non-compliance by President Joseph Kabila with the constitutionally mandated two-term limit;
- B. whereas the conflict is occurring in the context of a political crisis in the DRC; whereas an agreement reached on 31 December 2016 under the auspices of the National Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO) envisages a political transition to end with free and fair presidential elections to be held by the end of 2017 without changing the constitution; whereas to date no progress has been made on the implementation of the agreement;
- C. whereas in August 2016 armed clashes broke out between the Congolese army and local militias in the Central Kasai province and spread to the neighbouring provinces of Eastern Kasai, Lomami and Sankuru, causing a humanitarian crisis and resulting in the internal displacement of over one million civilians; whereas UN reports have documented mass violations of human rights, including the massacre of more than 500 civilians and the discovery of over 40 mass graves; whereas according to the UN nearly 400 000 children are on the verge of starvation; whereas 165 Congolese civil society organisations and human rights defenders have called for an independent international investigation into the mass violations of human rights in the provinces of Kasai and Lomami, emphasising that both governmental forces and militiamen are implicated in these crimes;
- D. whereas two UN experts, along with support staff, were kidnapped and murdered in the Kasai province in March 2017;
- E. whereas the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) launched a USD 64,5 million appeal in April 2017 for urgent humanitarian assistance in the Kasai region;
- F. whereas human rights organisations are continually reporting on the worsening situation in the country regarding human rights and freedom of expression, assembly and demonstration, an increase in politically motivated trials and the excessive force used against peaceful demonstrators, journalists and political opposition, particularly perpetrated by the army and militias; whereas women and children are the first victims of the conflict, and sexual and gender-based violence, often used as a tactic of war, is widespread;
- G. whereas, under its mandate which was renewed in April 2017 for another year,

MONUSCO should contribute to the protection of civilians amid the escalation of violence, and should support the implementation of the political agreement of 31 December 2016, while the MONUSCO contingent should also be deployed with due regard for new security and humanitarian priorities;

- H. whereas the EU adopted restrictive measures on 12 December 2016 against seven individuals in response to the obstruction of the electoral process and human rights violations, and on 29 May 2017 against a further nine individuals who hold positions of responsibility in the state administration and in the chain of command of the DRC security forces;
1. Remains deeply concerned at the deterioration of the political, security and humanitarian situation in the DRC; strongly condemns all human rights violations, including acts of violence by all perpetrators, abductions, killings, torture, sexual violence, and arbitrary arrests and illegal detentions;
 2. Calls for the opening of an independent and comprehensive committee of inquiry, including UN experts, in order to shed light on the violence in the Kasai region and to ensure that the perpetrators of these massacres are held to account for their actions; calls on the Member States to politically and financially support a committee of inquiry;
 3. Recalls that the Government of the DRC bears the primary responsibility to protect civilians within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including protection from crimes against humanity and war crimes;
 4. Strongly regrets the delays in organising the next presidential and legislative elections in the DRC, which constitutes a violation of the Congolese constitution; further regrets the lack of progress in implementing the political agreement of 31 December 2016 for transitional arrangements; recalls the commitment made by the Government of the DRC for transparent, free, and fair elections to be held in a credible manner before the end of 2017, ensuring the protection of political rights and freedoms and in compliance with the political agreement, leading to a peaceful transfer of power; reiterates the importance of the publication of a detailed electoral calendar, while welcoming the process of electoral registration; calls for the early implementation of the commitments contained in the agreement, in particular the amending and adoption of the necessary laws in the Congolese parliament before the end of the parliamentary session; calls for the electoral law to be amended in order to guarantee the representation of women through appropriate measures;
 5. Underlines that the Independent National Electoral Commission is responsible for being an impartial and inclusive institution in the implementation of a credible and democratic electoral process; calls for the immediate creation of a national council for monitoring the agreement and electoral process, in accordance with the 2016 political agreement;
 6. Recalls the duty of government to respect, protect and promote fundamental freedoms as a basis for democracy; urges the Congolese authorities to restore an environment conducive to the free and peaceful exercise of freedom of expression, association and assembly and freedom of the media; demands the immediate release of those unlawfully detained, including journalists, opposition members and civil society representatives; asks all political stakeholders to pursue political dialogue;

7. Condemns all violations of international humanitarian law committed by national authorities and security services; is further concerned by reports of serious human rights violations by local militias, including the unlawful recruitment and use of child soldiers, which could constitute war crimes under international law; considers that putting an end to the phenomenon of child soldiers must be a priority of the authorities and of the international community;
8. Reiterates its deep concern about the alarming humanitarian situation in the DRC, which includes displacement, food insecurity, epidemics and natural disasters; urges the EU and its Member States to increase financial and humanitarian aid through reliable organisations, in order to meet the urgent needs of the population, particularly in the Kasai province; strongly condemns all attacks conducted on humanitarian personnel and facilities, and insists that the Congolese authorities ensure the smooth and timely delivery of aid to the population by humanitarian organisations;
9. Welcomes the renewal of MONUSCO's mandate and the work done by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the DRC to protect civilians and uphold human rights in the electoral context; stresses that the original and current mandate, which applies to all UN troops in the country, is to 'neutralise armed groups'; calls for the entire MONUSCO force to fully intervene and protect the population from armed groups, to protect women from rape and other sexual violence, and not to allow any limitations on the basis of national command;
10. Notes with concern the risk of regional destabilisation; reiterates its support for the United Nations, the International Organisation of La Francophonie and the African Union in facilitating political dialogue; calls for an intensification of engagement in the Great Lakes region in order to prevent further destabilisation;
11. Recalls the importance of holding individuals to account for human rights abuses and other actions which undermine a consensual and peaceful solution in the DRC; supports the use of EU targeted sanctions against individuals responsible for serious human rights violations; calls for further investigations of, and sanctions to be extended against, the persons responsible, at the highest level of government, for the violence and crimes committed in the DRC and for the plunder of its natural resources, in conformity with the investigations carried out by the UN Group of Experts; stresses that the sanctions must include asset freezes and the prohibition of entering the EU;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the European Commission / High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the African Union, the Pan-African Parliament, the ACP-EU Council of Ministers and Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the Secretary-General of the UN, and the President, Prime Minister and Parliament of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.