



TEXTS ADOPTED

P8_TA(2017)0444

Terrorist attacks in Somalia

European Parliament resolution of 16 November 2017 on terrorist attacks in Somalia (2017/2962(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Somalia,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 May 2017 on the situation in the Dadaab refugee camp¹,
- having regard to the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) of 15 October 2017 on the attacks in Mogadishu, Somalia, and the statement of the Spokesperson of the VP/HR of 30 October 2017 on the attack in Somalia,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 3 April 2017 on Somalia,
- having regard to the EU intervention of 27 September 2017 on the 36th Session of the Human Rights Council on the Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on Somalia,
- having regard to UN Security Council resolutions 2372 (2017), adopted on 30 August 2017, and 2383 (2017), adopted on 7 November 2017,
- having regard to the UN Secretary General reports to the UN Security Council of 9 May and 5 September 2017 on Somalia,
- having regard to the UN Security Council statement of 15 October 2017 on the terrorist attack in Mogadishu,
- having regard to the statement of the African Union (AU) Commission Chairperson on 15 October 2017 on the attack in Mogadishu,
- having regard to statements by the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) condemning the terrorist attacks on 14 and 28 October 2017,

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0229.

- having regard to the final communiqué of the international conference on Somalia, held in London on 11 May 2017,
 - having regard to the EU-African Union Joint Communiqué on the Implementation of the Paris Agreement of 1 June 2017,
 - having regard to the AMISOM statement of 8 November 2017 announcing its intention to initiate a phased withdrawal of troops from Somalia starting in December 2017, with the intention of a full withdrawal by 2020,
 - having regard to the Cotonou Partnership Agreement between the ACP and the EU,
 - having regard to the mandate of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to promote and protect human and peoples' rights under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights,
 - having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict,
 - having regard to the Organisation of African Unity Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, adopted in 1999,
 - having regard to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on 14 October 2017 a massive truck bomb rocked the centre of Mogadishu, killing at least 358 people, injuring 228 others and a further 56 are still missing; whereas the attack in the heart of Mogadishu was one of the most lethal terrorist operations anywhere in the world in recent years; whereas over 30 people were killed on 28 October 2017, when two bombs detonated outside a hotel near the presidential palace in Mogadishu;
 - B. whereas, although no group has claimed responsibility for these cowardly attacks, they bear the hallmarks of Al-Shabaab, which now appears not to want to undermine any popular support by associating itself with such huge losses of civilian life; whereas Somali citizens have repeatedly denounced the violence of Al-Shabaab, and have united in response to the October 2017 bombings, marching in their thousands through Mogadishu in defiance of Al-Shabaab;
 - C. whereas there has been a series of deadly terrorist attacks in Mogadishu and throughout the country in recent months, including car bombings, random shootings, targeted executions and abductions, highlighting the continued threat of violent extremism facing the country;
 - D. whereas a majority of the attacks have mainly been attributed to the terrorist actions of Al-Shabaab, although Daesh is also known to be active in the country;
 - E. whereas the president of Somalia, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, after taking power in February 2017 in an election seen as a key milestone marking the battered East African country's gradual return to stability and prosperity, has pledged to rid Somalia of Al-Shabaab;
 - F. whereas in light of the spate of attacks throughout 2017, not least the horrific bombing

of 14 October 2017, it is not at all clear that Somali security forces, following AMISOM's intended departure in 2018, will be sufficiently capable of combatting terrorism without external aid;

- G. whereas AMISOM forces have on several occasions been accused of severe human rights abuses, including indiscriminate killings and some cases of sexual exploitation and abuse; whereas the redeployment of foreign troops in Somalian territory outside UN/AU mandates represents a significant cause for concern given previous allegations of human rights abuses by AMISOM forces;
- H. whereas, in addition to violent extremism, drought, clan conflict and forced evictions have resulted in hundreds of thousands of people being displaced in the past year alone, many into government-controlled urban centres; whereas many live in unsafe settlements, where women and girls in particular face abuse and sexual violence;
- I. whereas the threat of famine still looms large in Somalia, with approximately 400 000 Somali children suffering from acute malnutrition and with 3 million people living in crisis or emergency food security conditions; whereas there are some 1,1 million internally displaced persons in Somalia, with over 900 000 Somali refugees in the region;
- J. whereas there are 420 000 Somali refugees in camps in Kenya, with 350 000 in the Dadaab camp, and whereas the governments of Somalia and Kenya, and the UNHCR, have agreed to facilitate the voluntary return of 10 000 refugees to areas in Somalia that are not under Al-Shabaab control; whereas returnees face problems of re-integration and have little prospect of finding work; whereas many Dadaab refugees are of Somali descent, but have never known life outside the camp and are effectively stateless, meaning that they cannot be sent to Somalia;
- K. whereas the EU has since 2016 progressively increased its annual humanitarian support to Somalia, in particular in response to the severe drought affecting the country, allocating EUR 120 million to humanitarian partners in 2017 and releasing emergency aid of EUR 100 000 to help efforts to respond rapidly to medical needs in Mogadishu following the attack on 14 October 2017; whereas the EU also initially mobilised two ships of the EU Naval Operation ATALANTA, along with emergency aid flights, to deliver emergency medical supplies to Mogadishu hospitals;
- L. whereas the EU has provided EUR 486 million through the European Development Fund (2014-2020), focusing on the implementation of the 'Compact' and, in particular, on state- and peacebuilding, food security, resilience and education; whereas the EU is also committed to supporting AMISOM through the African Peace Facility;
- M. whereas in December 2016 the World Bank pledged to step up the fight against extreme poverty, announcing that developed countries had pledged a record USD 75 billion for grants and soft loans to the International Development Association (IDA); whereas, however, Somalia is not eligible for IDA funding as it owes the bank and the IMF over USD 300 million as part of a USD 5 billion debt mountain owed to multilateral and bilateral creditors;
- N. whereas while children continue to be killed, arbitrarily detained and recruited by Al-Shabaab, they are also being recruited into the Somali armed forces, despite the fact that

Somalia ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in January 2015 and endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration in November 2015, committing itself to taking concrete steps to protect students and educational institutions;

- O. whereas, in the absence of a functioning civilian judiciary, the Somali Government relies on military courts to try and convict civilians, which does not guarantee the rights of civilian defendants; whereas broad powers of investigation are granted to the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA), which currently does not have a law enforcement mandate, resulting in significant violations of the due process rights of detainees held by NISA;
- P. whereas, according to Transparency International, Somalia is the most corrupt country in the world for the 10th year running; whereas the Somali Government still faces numerous challenges, such as corruption and lack of widespread support from civilians, which has inevitably led to a lack of trust in state institutions and to subsequent support drifting to radical Islamist and terrorist groups;
- 1. Expresses its deepest sympathy with the victims of the recent terrorist attacks in Somalia, and with their families, and deeply regrets the loss of lives; at the same time, strongly condemns the perpetrators of these attacks, which have been attributed to the Al-Shabaab insurgent group;
- 2. Recalls that lasting stability and peace can only be achieved through social inclusion, sustainable development and good governance, based on democratic principles and the rule of law, in which peoples' dignity and rights are fully respected;
- 3. Welcomes the Commission's rapid emergency response following the 14 October 2017 terrorist attack; calls for the EU and its international partners to fulfil their commitments to Somalia, in the first instance through measures to establish food security, with a view to avoiding the structural problems that lead to famine, to fostering security and the reconciliation of communal grievances, to improving the management of public finances and to assisting in the completion of the constitutional review needed to achieve long-term stability;
- 4. Deplores the fact that, despite repeated warnings from humanitarian groups, aid agencies and the European Parliament, Somalia continues to teeter on the brink of famine; recalls that the death toll in the 2011 famine was exacerbated by insecurity and the actions of extremist militants from Al-Shabaab to hinder food aid deliveries to areas of south-central Somalia that at the time were under its control; calls on all parties to work with humanitarian agencies, fully respecting humanitarian principles to allow full and unhindered access to those who continue to suffer and who are in need, in particular those in rural areas;
- 5. Welcomes the electoral process organised in February 2017, which led to the election of a new president, and expresses its hope that the election will foster political stability, encourage the adoption of necessary reforms and move the federal project forward in close coordination and collaboration with the Federal Member States (FMS); stresses the importance of fighting the endemic corruption in the country and of providing options for the country's youth in order to reduce the risk of their recruitment by Al-Shabaab;

6. Welcomes the decision of the Somali National Leadership Forum to promote the establishment and registration of political parties, in advance of the 2020 elections and on the basis of the principle of one-person, one-vote, as well as the attempt to rebuild the state institutions and the adoption of important new laws on political parties and on the creation of an independent National Human Rights Commission; points out that efforts must be undertaken to increase women's representation;
7. Underlines the importance of the contribution made by the country's diaspora and civil society to re-establishing not only governance, but also social and economic development, highlighting the importance of the representation and participation of women in decision making; welcomes, in this context, the increase in the number of women members of the Somali Parliament (to 24 %) and Cabinet, keeping in mind the need for greater efforts to improve gender balance, both in the EU and in Somalia;
8. Takes note of the Nairobi Declaration of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) on durable solutions for Somali refugees and the reintegration of returnees in Somalia; welcomes the commitment to achieve a comprehensive regional approach, while at the same time maintaining protection and promoting self-reliance in the countries of asylum, which is to be undertaken with the support of the international community and to be consistent with international responsibility-sharing as outlined in the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) of the New York Declaration;
9. Calls for the Commission to step up consultation efforts with actors in the region, including the local populations, regional government and NGOs, with a view to focusing on locally identified problems and needs, fostering a conducive climate and increasing the capacity for the return of refugees to their home countries;
10. Expresses concern about NISA's broad remit and its use of military courts to prosecute alleged terrorism-related crimes, whereby it has repeatedly flouted due process and imposed the death penalty without accountability;
11. Calls on the Somali Government and the EU, as part of its rule-of-law activities in Somalia, to ensure that NISA is regulated with effective oversight mechanisms, and to strengthen the technical expertise of Somalia's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) so that it can carry out thorough and effective investigations respectful of citizens' rights;
12. Welcomes, in particular, the political agreement that Somalia's leaders reached on 16 April 2017 to integrate regional and federal forces in a coherent National Security Architecture capable of gradually taking on lead responsibility for providing security, and the swift establishment of the National Security Council and National Security Office;
13. Acknowledges AMISOM's role in enabling security and stability, allowing Somalia to establish political institutions and extend state authority, in anticipation of a transfer of security responsibility to Somali institutions and forces; welcomes the African Union's investigation into allegations of sexual violence by AMISOM troops; calls for full implementation of the recommendations of the UN Secretary General reports on Somalia, and, in line with UN Security Council resolution 2272 (2016), urges the AU and troop-contributing countries to ensure that allegations are properly and thoroughly

investigated and that those responsible are brought to justice; underlines the importance of the possibility of extending AMISOM's mandate beyond May 2018, warning that a premature transfer of responsibilities to Somali troops could be detrimental to long-term stability;

14. Underlines the need to fight impunity and to ensure accountability for crimes against humanity and war crimes carried out in Somalia; takes note of the Somali President's offer of amnesty for certain crimes to those who renounce terrorism and violence and want to leave Al-Shabaab and other terrorist groups, and encourages the development of amnesty legislation;
15. Deplores the recruitment of child soldiers by Al-Shabaab militants and the use of children by security forces as soldiers and as informants, including the use of captured or deserting child soldiers; recalls that the Government of Somalia has committed to rehabilitate former child soldiers and bring those responsible for their recruitment to justice; calls on international donors, including the EU, to prioritise the provision of rehabilitation services, education and safe schooling as a key element to breaking the deadly cycle of violence; urges the authorities to treat children suspected of association with Al-Shabaab primarily as victims and to consider the best interests of the child, following international protection standards as guiding principles;
16. Raises serious concern that natural resources, in particular charcoal, remain a significant source of financing for terrorists and a cause of serious environmental degradation in Somalia; calls on the Commission to examine how traceability and due diligence schemes can be widened to include all natural resources used to fuel terrorist activity and violence; calls, in this context, on all parties to ensure compliance with the UN Security Council resolution banning the export of Somali charcoal;
17. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the African Union, the President, the Prime Minister and the Parliament of Somalia, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the United Nations Security Council, the United Nations Human Rights Council, and the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly.