



TEXTS ADOPTED

P8_TA(2017)0473

Situation in Yemen

European Parliament resolution of 30 November 2017 on the situation in Yemen (2017/2849(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Yemen, in particular those of 15 June 2017¹ and 25 February 2016² on the humanitarian situation in Yemen, and of 9 July 2015 on the situation in Yemen³,
- 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) of 8 October 2016 on the attack in Yemen, of 19 October 2016 on the ceasefire in Yemen and of 21 November 2017 on the situation in Yemen,
- having regard to the statement by the EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides, of 11 November 2017 on the humanitarian situation in Yemen,
- of having regard to the Council conclusions³ April 2017 on the situation in Yemen,
- having regard to its resolution of 28 April 2016 on attacks on hospitals and schools as violations of international humanitarian law⁴ and its resolution of 27 February 2014 on the use of armed drones⁵,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines on promoting compliance with international humanitarian law,
- having regard to the UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions on Yemen, in particular Resolutions 2342 (2017), 2266 (2016), 2216 (2015), 2201 (2015) and 2140 (2014),
- having regard to the statements by the UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, of 30 January, 12 July, 19 August and 26 October 2017 on the situation

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0273.

² Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0066.

³ OJ C 265, 11.8.2017, p. 93.

⁴ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0201.

⁵ OJ C 285, 29.8.2017, p. 110.

in Yemen,

- having regard to the statement of then UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien to the UNSC of 12 July 2017,
 - having regard to the joint statement of the World Food Programme (WFP), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) of 16 November 2017 calling for the immediate lifting of the humanitarian blockade in Yemen,
 - having regard to the UN High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen, of 25 April 2017, during which USD 1,1 billion was pledged to bridge a USD 2,1 billion funding gap for 2017,
 - having regard to the decision of the UN Human Rights Council of September 2017 to investigate all alleged abuses of human rights in Yemen during the conflict,
 - having regard to the presidential statements issued by the UN Security Council on 15 June 2017 calling on parties in Yemen to engage constructively in a good-faith effort for conflict resolution, and on 9 August 2017 on the threat of famine in Yemen,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the various rounds of UN-brokered negotiations have not yet led to a meaningful progress towards a political solution in Yemen; whereas the conflicting parties and their regional and international backers, including Saudi Arabia and Iran, have failed to reach a ceasefire agreement or any type of settlement and the fighting and indiscriminate bombings continue unabated; whereas neither side has achieved a military victory and is unlikely to do so in the future; whereas finding a political solution to the conflict under the auspices of the UN peace initiative in Yemen should be a priority for the EU and the international community as a whole;
- B. whereas the humanitarian situation in Yemen continues to be catastrophic; whereas the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) declared the situation in Yemen the 'largest food security emergency in the world'; whereas, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 20,7 million people in Yemen require assistance, especially food assistance, with 7 million of that number facing a 'food security emergency'; whereas 2,2 million children are suffering from severe acute malnourishment, with one child dying of preventable causes every ten minutes; whereas there are 2,9 million internally displaced persons and 1 million returnees;
- C. whereas, according to the UN, more than 8 000 people, 60 % of whom civilians, have been killed and more than 50 000 injured, including a high number of children, in airstrikes and fighting on the ground since the Saudi-led coalition intervened in Yemen's civil war in March 2015; whereas the fighting, both on the ground and in the air, made it impossible for UN Human Rights Office field monitors to access the area to verify the number of civilian casualties; whereas these figures therefore only reflect the deaths and injuries that the OHCHR has managed to corroborate and confirm;
- D. whereas vulnerable groups, women and children are particularly affected by the on-going hostilities and the humanitarian crisis; whereas the number of civilian casualties continues to increase;

- E. whereas, according to Save the Children, 130 children die in Yemen every day; whereas at least 1,8 million children have had to drop out of school, in addition to the 1,6 million who were not in school before the conflict began;
- F. whereas the World Health Organisation reports that ‘more than half of all health facilities closed due to damage, destruction or lack of funds’ and medical supplies are in severe shortages; whereas 30 000 critical health workers have not been paid in over a year;
- G. whereas the destruction of infrastructure and breakdown of public services have fuelled the outbreak of cholera; whereas on 2 November 2017, OCHA announced that nearly 895 000 suspected cases of cholera with nearly 2 200 associated deaths had been reported since 27 April 2017; whereas more than half of the suspected cases involve children; whereas it is difficult to accurately ascertain the true number of cholera cases as there is limited access to many regions and many suspected patients are treated before being completely diagnosed;
- H. whereas imports account for almost 90 % of the country’s staple foods; whereas the UN Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures has already stressed in the past that the aerial and naval blockade imposed on Yemen by the coalition forces has been one of the main causes of the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe; whereas this blockade has restricted and disrupted the import and export of food, fuel and medical supplies, as well as humanitarian aid; whereas the unreasonable delay and/or denial of entry to vessels to Yemeni ports amounts to an unlawful unilateral coercive measure (UCM) under international law;
- I. whereas the humanitarian situation in Yemen was further exacerbated by the imposition on 6 November 2017 by the Saudi-led coalition of a blockade of the country’s land, sea and air borders; whereas the sea port of Aden and the al-Wadea land crossing at the Saudi-Yemeni border have been reopened; whereas, however, the ports of Hodeida and Saleef, as well as the airport of Sana’a, taken by the Houthi rebels in March 2015, through which approximately 80 % of imports, including commercial and humanitarian goods, enter Yemen, are still subject to the blockade; whereas aid agencies have warned that, if the blockade is not lifted, Yemen will face the largest famine the world has seen for decades, with millions of victims;
- J. whereas UNSC Resolution 2216 explicitly provides for individuals to be classed by the Sanctions Committee as ‘obstructing the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Yemen’;
- K. whereas the coalition-led air strikes in and around Sana’a have intensified in recent weeks, causing civilian casualties and the destruction of infrastructure; whereas dozens of Saudi-led airstrikes have been blamed for indiscriminately killing and wounding civilians in violation of the laws of war, including through the use of internationally banned cluster munitions; whereas Houthi rebels fired ballistic missiles on Riyadh’s main civilian international airport on 4 November 2017; whereas dozens more rockets have been fired into Saudi territory this year; whereas the laws of war prohibit deliberate and indiscriminate attacks on civilians; whereas such attacks are considered war crimes and individuals who commit them may be prosecuted for these crimes;
- L. whereas the situation in Yemen carries grave risks for the stability of the region, in particular that of the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea and the wider Middle East; whereas

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has been able to benefit from the deterioration of the political and security situation in Yemen, expanding its presence and increasing the number and scale of its terrorist attacks; whereas AQAP and the so-called Islamic State (ISIS/Daesh) has established its presence in Yemen and has carried out terrorist attacks, killing hundreds of people;

- M. whereas there is an international arms embargo in place against the Iranian-backed Houthi/Saleh forces; whereas according to the 18th EU Annual Report on Arms Exports, EU Member States have continued to authorise transfers of arms to Saudi Arabia since the escalation of the conflict, in a violation of Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP of 8 December 2008 on arms export control; whereas Parliament's resolution of 25 February 2016 on the humanitarian situation in Yemen called on the VP/HR to launch an initiative to impose an EU arms embargo on Saudi Arabia, in line with Common Position 2008/944/CFSP;
 - N. whereas the education of 2 million children has completely stopped according to the UNICEF; whereas 'more than 1 700 schools are currently unfit for use due to conflict-related damage, hosting of IDPs, or occupation by armed groups' according to the OCHA; whereas cases of recruitment and use of children to fight or perform military duties have been documented; whereas thousands of teachers, after not getting paid for over a year, were forced to quit their jobs to find an alternative income; whereas, due to the destruction of crucial infrastructure, the small percentage of schools that are still functioning are hard to reach;
 - O. whereas journalists are repeatedly blocked from entering Yemen, namely by the Saudi-led coalition, including by banning them from UN aid flights to the Houthi rebel-controlled capital, Sana'a;
 - P. whereas the decision to add certain individuals to the target lists of drone operations is often made without court warrants or orders; whereas the targeting and subsequent killing of certain individuals are carried out without due process;
 - Q. whereas, since the start of the conflict, the European Union has allocated EUR 171,7 million in humanitarian aid; whereas EU humanitarian aid gives priority to health, nutrition, food security, protection, shelter, and water and sanitation;
 - R. whereas despite the High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen, held in Geneva in April 2017 – during which various countries and organisations made pledges amounting to USD 1,1 billion – as of 21 November 2017, donors had delivered funds amounting to only 56,9 % of the UN's USD 2,3 billion humanitarian appeal for Yemen for 2017;
1. Condemns in the strongest terms the ongoing violence in Yemen and all attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, which constitute war crimes; expresses grave concern at the alarming deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Yemen; deeply regrets the loss of life caused by the conflict and the extreme suffering of those deprived of humanitarian aid and vital commodities caught up in the fighting being displaced or losing their livelihoods, and expresses its condolences to the families of the victims; reaffirms its commitment to continuing to support Yemen and the Yemeni people;
 2. Reiterates its full support for the efforts of the UN Secretary-General and the Special

Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen to achieve a resumption of negotiations; stresses that only a political, inclusive and negotiated solution to the conflict can restore peace and preserve the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen; calls on all international and regional actors to engage constructively with Yemeni parties to enable a de-escalation of the conflict and a negotiated settlement; urges Saudi Arabia and Iran to work to end the fighting in Yemen and to improve bilateral relations; calls on Iran to immediately cease providing support to Houthi forces in Yemen, either directly or through proxies;

3. Calls on all parties to the conflict to urgently agree on a cessation of hostilities to be monitored by the UN as a first step towards the resumption of peace talks under UN leadership; urges all parties to engage, in good faith and without preconditions, in a new round of UN-led peace negotiations as soon as possible; regrets the decision of Houthi fighters and their allies to reject Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed as a peace negotiator;
4. Calls on the VP/HR to urgently propose an integrated EU strategy for Yemen and to make a renewed push for a Yemeni peace initiative under the auspices of the UN; restates its support for the efforts of the European External Action Service (EEAS) to facilitate a resumption of negotiations, and urges all parties to the conflict to react in a constructive manner and without attaching preconditions to these efforts; emphasises that the implementation of confidence-building measures, such as the release of political prisoners, immediate steps towards a sustainable ceasefire, a mechanism for a UN-monitored withdrawal of forces, facilitation of humanitarian and commercial access, Track II initiatives involving political, security and civil society actors, is essential to facilitating a return to the right political track;
5. Deplores the closure of Yemen's seaports, airports and land crossings by Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners, which has led to a further deterioration of the situation in the country; considers measures by the coalition to resume operations in the port of Aden and to open the al-Wadea border crossing as a step in the right direction; urges the coalition to ensure immediate resumption of the activities of the ports of Hodeida and Saleef and the opening of land borders for humanitarian relief and the delivery of basic commercial commodities;
6. Stresses that the UN Security Council, with a view both to addressing the humanitarian emergency, and to building confidence between the sides in a way which will be conducive to political negotiations, is encouraging rapid agreement on the deployment of additional UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism monitors, increasing the capacity of all Yemeni ports, and increased access to Sana'a Airport;
7. Calls on all the parties involved to allow immediate and full humanitarian access to the conflict-affected areas in order to be able to reach those in need and calls for the security of aid workers to be ensured; calls on the Council and the UNSC, in implementing UNSC Resolution 2216, to identify individuals obstructing the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Yemen and impose targeted sanctions on them;
8. Condemns the indiscriminate coalition-led airstrikes leading to civilian casualties, including children, and destruction of civilian and medical infrastructure; condemns the similarly indiscriminate attacks by Houthi and allied forces that have resulted in the deaths of civilians and the use of hospitals and schools by these groups as bases from which to stage attacks;

9. Condemns the indiscriminate missile attacks on Saudi cities, notably the main civilian international airport in Riyadh, King Khaled International Airport, on 4 November 2017, by the Houthi/Saleh forces;
10. Urges all parties to grant journalists access into the country, including within all territories and across front lines within the country; notes that Yemen's block on journalists from entering the country is responsible for the lack of coverage of the crisis, which hinders humanitarian workers' efforts to draw the attention of the international community and donors to the catastrophic situation; welcomes the recent release of Yahya Abdulraqueeb al-Jubeihi, Abed al-Mahziri and Kamel al-Khozani and urges the immediate and unconditional release of all remaining imprisoned journalists;
11. Calls on all sides to comply with international humanitarian law and international human rights law, to ensure the protection of civilians and to refrain from directly targeting civilian infrastructure, in particular medical facilities and water systems;
12. Recalls that the deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and medical personnel, amounts to a grave violation of international humanitarian law; urges the international community to make provisions for the international criminal prosecution of those responsible for violations of international law committed in Yemen; fully supports, in this regard, the decision of the UN Human Rights Council to carry out a comprehensive investigation into the crimes committed in the conflict in Yemen;
13. Fully supports efforts by EU Member States and third countries to establish international mechanisms to gather evidence and to hold those responsible for grave human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law to account; stresses that ensuring accountability for violations is indispensable to achieving a long-term settlement of the conflict; welcomes, in this regard, the setting up of a UN Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts with the mandate to monitor and report on the human rights situation in Yemen and carry out a comprehensive examination of all alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law and other appropriate and applicable fields of international law committed by all parties to the conflict since March 2015; deplores the fact that efforts to set up an independent inquiry were blocked;
14. Expresses grave concern that the instability in Yemen has been exploited by terrorist and extremist organisations such as ISIS/Daesh and AQAP; urges the Government of Yemen to assume its responsibilities in the fight against ISIS/Daesh and AQAP; emphasises the need for all parties to the conflict to take resolute action against such groups, whose activities represent a grave threat to a negotiated settlement and the security of the region and beyond; affirms the EU's commitment to opposing extremist groups and their ideologies and stresses the need for parties in the region to do the same;
15. Calls on the Council to effectively promote compliance with international humanitarian law, as provided for in the relevant EU guidelines; reiterates, in particular, the need for the strict application by all EU Member States of the rules laid down in Common Position 2008/944/CFSP; recalls, in this regard, its resolution on the humanitarian situation in Yemen of 25 February 2016, which calls on the VP/HR to launch an initiative to impose an EU arms embargo against Saudi Arabia, given the serious

allegations of breaches of international humanitarian law by Saudi Arabia in Yemen and the fact that the continued licensing of weapons sales to Saudi Arabia would therefore be in breach of Common Position 2008/944/CFSP;

16. Supports the EU's call on all parties to the conflict to take all necessary steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, in situations of armed conflict; strongly condemns the violations of the rights of the child and is concerned by children's limited access to even basic health care and education; condemns the recruitment and use of child soldiers in hostilities, be it by government forces or by armed opposition groups;
17. Welcomes the commitments made at the High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen and stresses the need for coordinated humanitarian action under UN leadership to ease the suffering of the people of Yemen; calls for the immediate mobilisation of the funds pledged to Yemen and for full funding of the UN 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan for Yemen;
18. Welcomes the fact that the EU and its Member States are ready to step up humanitarian assistance to the population across the country in order to respond to rising needs and to mobilise their development assistance to fund projects in crucial sectors;
19. Strongly supports the work of UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock and his predecessor Stephen O'Brien in seeking to ease the suffering of the Yemeni population;
20. Calls for the EU and its Member States, alongside their humanitarian and political efforts, to support peacebuilding and resilience actions, including by supporting civil society actors and local economic and governance structures, in order to ensure the rapid restoration of basic services and infrastructure, stimulate the local economy and promote peace and social cohesion;
21. 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 governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and the Government of Yemen.