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## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Syria  
(2014/2531(RSP))

**Véronique De Keyser, Libor Rouček, Pino Arlacchi, Ricardo Cortés Lastra, Saïd El Khadraoui, Ana Gomes, Richard Howitt, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Maria Eleni Koppa, David Martin, María Muñiz De Urquiza, Raimon Obiols, Pier Antonio Panzeri, Joanna Senyszyn, Boris Zala**

on behalf of the S&D Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Syria  
(2014/2531(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria, in particular those of 12 September 2013 on the situation in Syria<sup>1</sup> and of 9 October 2013 on EU and Member State measures to tackle the flow of refugees as a result of the conflict in Syria<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on Syria of 20 January 2014,
  - having regard to the remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton at the Geneva II Conference on Syria of 22 January 2014, and to her statement on the decision of the General Assembly of the Syrian Opposition Coalition to attend the Geneva II Conference of 18 January 2014,
  - having regard to United Nations Security Council resolution 2119 (2013) of 27 September 2013,
  - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
  - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,
  - having regard to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the additional protocols thereto,
  - having regard to the decision of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons of 27 September 2013, establishing special procedures for the expeditious destruction of the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic and stringent verification thereof,
  - having regard to the report of 21 January 2014 on the credibility of certain evidence with regard to torture and execution of persons incarcerated by the current Syrian regime, drawn up by a team of international legal experts,
  - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas more than 130 000 people have lost their lives, more than 2.3 million refugees from the country have been registered with the UNHCR, an estimated 6.5 million people have been internally displaced, an estimated 40 % of the country's housing stock has been destroyed and more than 9 million people in the country are in need of humanitarian aid as a consequence of the violent crisis in Syria;
- B. whereas the brutal crackdown by President al-Assad's regime against its population has led to a complex conflict in Syria, described by many as a proxy war with a strong

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2013)0378.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2013)0414.

infiltration by Islamist extremists, including the Al-Qaeda-affiliated Al Nusra Front and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) groups;

- C. whereas the violent crisis in Syria has resulted in a humanitarian catastrophe of a scale unprecedented in recent history, with no end in sight; whereas more than half of those affected are children suffering from starvation, malnutrition and disease; whereas the lack of access to food, water, basic health care, hygiene, shelter and education is a critical dimension of this humanitarian catastrophe; whereas the delivery of humanitarian aid is being hindered by the lack of security, denial of access, and infrastructure obstacles;
- D. whereas, in its resolution 2118 (2013), the UN Security Council fully endorsed the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012, called for the convening of an international conference on Syria to implement this communiqué, and called on all Syrian parties to engage seriously and constructively at this conference, stressing that they should be committed to the implementation of the communiqué and to the achievement of stability and reconciliation;
- E. whereas the Geneva II process is a result of major efforts by the international community; whereas confidence-building – through local ceasefires, the release or exchange of prisoners, and the facilitation of humanitarian aid delivery – is a key element of this process; whereas, on 18 January 2014, the General Assembly of the Syrian Coalition of Revolutionary and Opposition Forces decided to accept the invitation to join this process; whereas Iran was invited and then disinvited to the conference held in Switzerland; whereas negotiations were suspended on 31 January 2014 and the next round of talks is planned for 10 February 2014;
- F. whereas, in its conclusions of 20 January 2014, the EU Foreign Affairs Council reiterated that ‘the only solution to the conflict is a genuine political transition, based on the full implementation of the Geneva Communiqué, and preserving the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria’;
- G. whereas at the second international pledging conference for Syria, held on 15 January 2014 in Kuwait, international actors pledged more than USD 2.4 billion; whereas UN appeals are requesting USD 6.5 billion to finance the organisation’s strategies for Syria and its neighbouring countries this year; whereas in 2013 UN appeals to address the Syrian crisis amounted to USD 4.4 billion and were funded at a rate of almost 70 %; whereas the EU pledged an additional EUR 550 million at the Kuwait conference, bringing the total EU funding since the start of the crisis to over EUR 1.1 billion;
- H. whereas, in its Report on the Alleged Use of Chemical Weapons in the Ghouta Area of Damascus on 21 August 2013, published on 13 September 2013, the UN Mission to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic concluded, on the basis of the evidence obtained during its investigations, that chemical weapons had been used in the conflict in Syria, notably against civilians, including children, on a relatively large scale; whereas UN Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), which was unanimously adopted, declared that neither the Syrian Government nor any other party in Syria may use, develop, produce, acquire, stockpile, retain or transfer chemical weapons, and endorsed the expeditious destruction of Syria’s

chemical weapons programme, which should be implemented by 30 June 2014; whereas the EU contributed to, and several of its Member States – notably Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom – are actively participating in, these operations; whereas, however, the majority of the deaths and injuries in the violent crisis in Syria have been caused by conventional weapons;

- I. whereas the EU has accepted the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces as legitimate representatives of the Syrian people; whereas, however, the Syrian opposition is still fragmented by significant internal divisions; whereas more than a thousand factions are fighting the regime; whereas the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence estimates that between 3 300 and 11 000 foreign individuals have joined various factions, often with a radical Islamist agenda, over the past three years, with an estimated number of fighters from EU Member States ranging from 400 to 2 000, mainly from Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom;
- J. whereas human rights are still being violated on a large scale by both the regime and several rebel groups in Syria; whereas a photographer who defected from the Syrian military police delivered 55 000 digital images of some 11 000 victims to the Syrian National Movement, which suggested widespread and systemic violations of international humanitarian law by the regime; whereas a team of high-level international legal experts examined the images and concluded that ‘upon the material it has reviewed there is clear evidence, capable of being believed by a tribunal of fact in a court of law, of systemic torture and killing of detained persons by the agents of the Syrian government’ and that such evidence would support findings of crimes against humanity and could also support findings of war crimes;
- K. whereas, according to UNICEF, 5.5 million children have been affected by the Syrian crisis – 4.3 million inside Syria and 1.2 million in neighbouring countries – with 3 million children displaced inside Syria; whereas nearly 8 000 unaccompanied and separated Syrian child refugees have been registered in neighbouring countries; whereas nearly 3 million children have dropped out of school in Syria since 2011 and more than 4 000 schools are damaged, destroyed or are being used as shelters for displaced persons; whereas at least 500 000 registered Syrian child refugees are not enrolled in schools in neighbouring countries;
- L. whereas Palestinian refugees remain a particularly vulnerable group in the crisis in Syria; whereas almost all of the 540 000 Palestinian refugees in Syria are in need of emergency assistance, while more than half of them have been displaced again within the country; whereas Palestinian refugees, who have no Syrian citizenship, do not have the same rights as Syrian refugees and are, in the vast majority of cases, unable to leave the country; whereas the situation of the 18 000 Palestinian refugees trapped in extremely difficult conditions in the Yarmouk refugee camp, which has been under siege since July 2013, is particularly alarming; whereas UNRWA and other international aid organisations have been denied access to deliver essential supplies to civilians in Yarmouk for months; whereas this collective punishment of the population is having a devastating effect, with mass suffering; whereas, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, more than 50 people have died in the camp since

September 2013 from hunger or lack of medical care; whereas the limited number of food parcels that were allowed into the camp by the Syrian authorities, in the run-up to the Geneva II Conference, were far from enough to meet people's needs; whereas, in her statement of 17 January 2014, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said, in this context, that 'impeding humanitarian assistance to civilians in desperate need may amount to a war crime';

- M. whereas many human rights defenders, intellectuals, religious figures, journalists and civil society activists have lost their lives, disappeared or been tortured at the hands of the regime's security services, and whereas they are also increasingly becoming targets of crimes committed by several rebel groups; whereas 2011 Sakharov Prize winner Razan Zeitouneh – one of the most vocal early leaders of the uprising against the Syrian regime and an advocate of non-violence and civil resistance – was abducted, together with her husband Wael Hamahed and human rights activists Nazem Hamadeh and Samira Khalil, by an unidentified group of gunmen from the Damascus suburb of Douma in December 2013 and has disappeared;
- N. whereas asylum claims in the EU from Syrians have continued to increase over the past year and the Syrian refugee crisis constitutes a first test for the newly revised Common European Asylum System; whereas, in its resolution of 9 October 2013, Parliament encouraged the Member States to address acute needs through resettlement in addition to existing national quotas and through humanitarian admission;
1. Expresses again its deepest concern over the devastating effects of the violent crisis in Syria, which has resulted in mass suffering for the population in the country and in neighbouring countries and constitutes a major threat to stability and security in the entire Middle East region and beyond; stresses that there is no military solution to this crisis and that any lasting solution can only be achieved through a Syrian-led political process with the backing of the international community; commends and continues supporting the efforts of UN-Arab League Joint Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi in this regard; calls on all international actors to avoid any action which may further intensify the violence and increase the suffering of the population in Syria;
  2. Welcomes, in this spirit, the international conference on Syria held in Switzerland, which should be a first step in a process leading to a political solution to the crisis, and stresses the fundamental importance of keeping the Geneva II process going; commends the decision of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces to participate in this process; notes the crucial importance of confidence-building measures in this context; urges the negotiating delegations, therefore, to agree on local ceasefires, the lifting of sieges on certain urban areas, the release or exchange of prisoners and the facilitation of humanitarian access to civilians in need, as stepping stones to substantive negotiations on the basis of the Geneva Communiqué; notes also the importance of involving all key international actors concerned in the Geneva II process; takes the view that a long-term agreement on Iran's nuclear programme may produce a regional context conducive to the reconciliation process in Syria;
  3. Stresses that, in view of the unprecedented scale of the crisis, alleviating the suffering of millions of Syrians in need of basic goods and services in Syria and its neighbouring

countries must be a priority for the EU and the international community at large; calls for a UN Security Council humanitarian resolution in this regard; urges again the EU and its Member States to live up to their humanitarian responsibilities and increase their assistance to Syrian refugees, as well as to coordinate their efforts more effectively in this field; stresses the importance of gender-specific concerns in the field of humanitarian aid; calls again on all parties involved in the conflict to facilitate the safe and unhindered provision of humanitarian aid through all possible channels, including across borders and conflict lines, and to ensure the safety of all medical personnel and humanitarian workers, in line with the statement made by the President of the UN Security Council on 2 October 2013; reiterates also its call for the establishment of safe havens along the Turkish-Syrian border, and possibly within Syria, and for the creation of humanitarian corridors by the international community;

4. Welcomes the progress and the international cooperation as regards the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons, and calls for full implementation of the decision of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons of 27 September 2013; is concerned at reports that, by the end of January 2014, only 5 % of Syria's chemical weapons stockpile had been removed from the country for destruction, and urges the Syrian authorities to abide by the timetable laid down in UN Security Council resolution 2118 (2013); recalls, however, that the overwhelming majority of deaths and injuries that have occurred in the violent crisis in Syria have been caused by conventional weapons;
5. Expresses its concern at the increasing involvement of extremist Islamist groups and foreign individuals in the conflict in Syria, the rise of religiously and ethnically motivated violence in the country, and the continued fragmentation and internal divisions within the opposition; continues to encourage the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces to create a more united, inclusive and organised opposition front internally and externally, and calls again for further EU support to the Coalition in this regard;
6. Expresses its deepest concern at the continued widespread violations of human rights by regime forces and several rebel groups in Syria; recalls that all those responsible for crimes against humanity and war crimes must be brought to justice; continues supporting, in this context, the work of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, established by the UN Human Rights Council, and reiterates its call for the UN Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court for a formal investigation;
7. Calls for an in-depth investigation into the 55 000 pictures delivered to the Syrian National Movement by a photographer who defected from the Syrian military police and for those responsible for the killing and torture to be brought to justice; calls on the Syrian Government to fully respect the rights of all detainees and to grant international monitors, and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic in particular, immediate and unconditional access to all its detention facilities;
8. Calls for zero tolerance with regard to the killing, abduction and recruitment of children in particular, and calls on all parties to the conflict to comply fully with UN Security

Council resolution 1612 (2005) of 26 July 2005 on children and armed conflicts; underlines also the importance of preventing acts of sexual and gender-based violence and of providing appropriate support to victims; stresses, in this context, the importance of early response programmes to gender-based violence (GBV); welcomes also the 'No Lost Generation' initiative of the UN and its humanitarian partners, which aims to heal the wounds of Syrian children and to preserve their future, and encourages the EU to actively support this initiative;

9. Calls for special attention to be paid to the situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria, and particularly the alarming humanitarian situation in the Yarmouk refugee camp; calls on all the parties involved in the conflict to allow UNRWA and other international aid organisations immediate and unconditional access to this refugee camp, with the aim of alleviating the extreme suffering of its population;
10. Urges all international actors, including the EU and its Member States, to make every possible effort to secure the release of human rights activists, including 2011 Sakharov Prize winner Razan Zeitouneh, intellectuals, religious figures, journalists – including all European journalists and photographers – and civil-society activists abducted and held by the regime or rebel groups in Syria;
11. Stresses the importance of providing protection to particularly vulnerable groups in Syrian society, such as ethnic and religious minorities, including Christians, in the current crisis, with the aim of preserving the tradition of intercultural, interethnic and interreligious coexistence in the country for a future new Syria; stresses also the importance of strengthening civil society actors in Syria, and of the active and meaningful participation of women, young people and civil-society representatives in the Geneva II process and in the rebuilding of the country;
12. Commends Syria's neighbours – notably Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq – for their efforts to accommodate Syrian refugees and encourages them to maintain their open borders policy; underlines the importance of providing access to education for all Syrian children in order to preserve their generation for a future new Syria; reiterates, at the same time, its grave concern over the economic, social, political and security impact of the Syrian crisis on the entire region, with special regard to Lebanon and Jordan; calls on the international community, including the EU and its Member States, to continue providing effective assistance to Syria's neighbours in this context;
13. Commends also the pledges made by the international community at the second international pledges conference for Syria, which took place on 15 January 2014 in Kuwait, and calls on all donors to fulfil their pledges; notes, however, that further significant efforts are required to meet humanitarian needs in Syria, and calls, therefore, for additional financial contributions from international actors;
14. Stresses that the crisis in Syria requires a coherent common approach by the EU and its Member States, in the field of humanitarian aid delivery and beyond, and continues to support VP/HR Catherine Ashton and Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva in their efforts to ensure better coordinator in this field;
15. 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 parliaments and governments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the UN-Arab League Special Envoy to Syria, the Parliament and Government of Iraq, the Parliament and Government of Jordan, the Parliament and Government of Lebanon, the Parliament and Government of Turkey, and all the parties involved in the conflict in Syria.