Resolution on Somalia

2007/2660(RSP) - 15/11/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a joint resolution by 61 votes in favour to 3 against with no abstentions, strongly condemning the serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law committed by all parties to the conflict in Somalia. It called for an immediate end to hostilities, demanding that all warring factions refrain from indiscriminate attacks on civilians. Parliament called for an independent panel to investigate war crimes and human rights violations.

It pointed out that Somalia has not had a functioning government since the overthrow of the Said Barre regime in 1991, since when the political situation has been one of anarchy, marked by inter-clan fighting and banditry. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that at least 100 000 people have been displaced as a result of recent fighting between the Union of Islamic Courts and allied Ethiopian and TFG troops. The worsening security situation in Mogadishu, has prevented national and international NGOs from coping with an unfolding humanitarian catastrophe and responding to emergencies.

Parliament went on to point out that approximately 38 000 children under the age of five among the rural population are estimated to be acutely malnourished and 10 000 are estimated to be severely malnourished and at risk of death if they do not receive appropriate care. Cases of cholera have been confirmed in the region, and urgent measures to provide safe water and sanitation facilities for internally displaced persons must be taken in order to contain the spread of the disease.

The report recalled that the international community and all parties to the present conflict have a responsibility to protect civilians, to allow delivery of aid and to respect humanitarian space and the safety of humanitarian workers. It demanded that the right conditions be immediately created for an adequate response to the humanitarian catastrophe in Somalia. Unless strong measures are quickly taken by the international community to improve the situation, there is a clear risk of the Somalia conflict growing into a regional war affecting the entire Horn of Africa. The international community must avoid simplistic perceptions of the terrorist threats in the Horn of Africa, at times used to divert attention from internal problems and pave the way for foreign military intervention, and, together with the EU, increase the provision of humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons and people in need.

Parliament called on the TFG to engage with key Somali stakeholders in a consultative process leading to the appointment of a new Prime Minister. All Somali stakeholders must renew their efforts towards political dialogue and remain focused on resuming the process outlined by the Transitional Federal Charter of the Somali Republic of 2004. Successful dialogue and reconciliation is critical to ensuring free and fair elections in 2009 and establishing lasting peace and stability in Somalia. Parliament also called for an end to all foreign military intervention in Somalia, and a strengthening of the role of civil society – particularly women – in the process of national reconciliation. The African Union was asked to encourage its member states to honour their commitments to contribute to the peacekeeping force, since only 1600 soldiers out of the 8 000 that the African Union had agreed to send have actually been deployed. The EU was requested to increase its efforts to provide the requisite political, financial and logistical support to the deployment of the African Union peacekeeping troops, as well as to take all other steps conducive to the facilitation of the peace process.

Parliament went on to reiterate its call on the International Somalia Contact Group to encourage positive political developments and engagement with actors inside Somalia, with a view to supporting the implementation of the Transitional Federal Charter and Institutions, establishing effective governance and

stability and addressing the international community's concerns regarding terrorism. It urged strict and renewed application and monitoring of the arms embargo against Somalia imposed by the UN in 1992, for which scant respect is paid. Violators of the Somalia arms embargo must start being held accountable.

Parliament condemned the TFG's systematic harassment of journalists, its closure of media outlets and its failure to investigate the killing of journalists, all of which have deeply damaged independent reporting in Somalia. The TFG must investigate these attacks as well as to cease its own harassment of the media. Parliament pointed out that the perpetrators of most of the killings of individual journalists in 2007 remain unknown and, to date, Somali Government officials have consistently failed to condemn the killings, much less investigate, arrest, or prosecute anyone in connection with them.