

Resolution on the EU response to the deteriorating situation in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo

2008/2673(RSP) - 20/11/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 19 November 2008, the European Parliament adopted by 486 votes to 30, with 17 abstentions, a resolution on the EU response to the deteriorating situation in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The resolution had been tabled for consideration in plenary by the Greens/EFA, EPP-ED, PES, UEN, and ALDE groups. Parliament points out that the fighting between the DRC army, the Mai Mai militia, the rebel troops (National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP) of ousted General Laurent Nkunda and the fighters of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) as well as troops of Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army has been escalating and continues to cause tremendous hardship to the civilian populations of North Kivu.

Since the beginning of the violence millions of people have been killed and displaced and an estimated 250 000 have been displaced since the resumption of fighting in the DRC by General Laurent Nkunda in August 2008, causing a humanitarian catastrophe in the east of the country. Parliament states that it is extremely concerned at the increase in clashes in North Kivu and the consequences for the population of the east of the DRC and the region as a whole, particularly the humanitarian consequences resulting from the recent offensive by the CNDP, which has displaced and killed large numbers of people in North Kivu. It expresses its deep outrage at the massacres, crimes against humanity and acts of sexual violence against women and girls in the eastern provinces of the DRC, and calls on all relevant national and international authorities systematically to bring the perpetrators to justice. It calls on the UN Security Council, as a matter of urgency, to take all measures capable of genuinely preventing any further attacks on the civilian population of the eastern provinces of the DRC.

Members welcome the decisions taken by the Commission and the Member States to **increase humanitarian aid** to the civilian population affected by this crisis and draw attention to the difficulties faced by the humanitarian organisations in delivering humanitarian assistance. They urge Laurent Nkunda to respect his own declaration supporting the peace process for the east of the DRC, made after talks with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the UN, Olusegun Obasanjo. They call on the CNDP to rejoin the Amani peace process without delay. Parliament reaffirms its support for the DRC authorities in the search for a political solution to the crisis. An international conference on the Great Lakes should be convened to find a viable political solution to the conflict and promote sound regional economic integration, which will benefit all countries of the region.

The resolution emphasises the need for further efforts to put an end to the activity of **foreign armed groups** in the east of the DRC, in particular the FDLR. The governments of the DRC and of other countries in the region must take the necessary steps to this end. Parliament welcomes the DRC-Rwanda agreement allowing Rwandan intelligence teams to go into the DRC and cooperate with the DRC army to end the FDLR presence in the region.

It calls on the African Union, the UN Security Council and key international players, including the EU, the USA and China, to increase pressure on all parties to push forward with the peace process, finding a solution to the problem of control of the mineral resources and aiming for a **broad peace agreement rather than only a ceasefire**. Parliament further calls on these actors to put pressure on Rwanda and Uganda to give a commitment to end the free movement and operations of Nkunda's troops on their territory.

EU Member States must implement the recommendation of the UN Panel of Experts on the illegal exploitation of the **DRC's natural resources**, including sanctions against those persons and companies whose participation in the pillage has been proven, in order to contribute to the stabilisation of the

country. Parliament points out that the illegal exploitation of natural resources in the east of the DRC is a source of funding for the rebel groups and, therefore, of instability in the region. The DRC authorities, in collaboration with MONUC, must close down the economic bases of rebel groups by preventing them from **accessing mineral supplies** (particularly diamonds, coltan and gold) and trading networks. Parliament calls on the Commission and Member States to ensure that European companies do not trade in, handle or import products derived from minerals that have been sourced in a manner that benefits armed groups in the DRC, and hold accountable any that persist in such practices.

Members reaffirm their **support for MONUC** in the present dramatic circumstances in which, despite its shortcomings, its presence remains indispensable. They call for every effort to be made to allow it to carry out its mandate in full and to use the force of arms to protect those under threat. Parliament calls on the Council, and in particular, Belgium, France, Italy and the United Kingdom, to play a leading role in ensuring that the United Nations Security Council and the Department for Peacekeeping Operations supports MONUC by strengthening its operational capacities in terms of appropriate equipment and manpower.

Lastly, Parliament calls on the Council and the Commission to draw up, together with the Government of the DRC, the UN and other major donors, a new plan for large-scale disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) in the DRC based on the EU concept for support to DDR and an ambitious security sector reform strategy for the country based on the EU's Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform, both to be adequately financed by both Community and CFSP funding.