

Resolution on the situation in Zimbabwe

2008/2695(RSP) - 18/12/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of the same date, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the attacks on the situation in Zimbabwe. The resolution had been tabled for consideration in plenary by the EPP-ED, PES, ALDE, greens/ALE IND/DEM and UEN groups.

Parliament notes that Zimbabwe is facing a humanitarian crisis of massive proportions, with 5,1 million people, almost half the population, facing hunger. An outbreak of cholera, the result of the breakdown of basic water and sanitation services, has killed at least 783 people and infected over 16 400 people. According to the international medical humanitarian organisation, Médecins Sans Frontières, at least 1.4 million people are at risk of contracting cholera if the outbreak is not contained by addressing its root causes. However, the Zimbabwean authorities have made it clear that they cannot end the humanitarian crisis and will not end the violent repression of their opponents.

Parliament also notes that life expectancy in Zimbabwe has dropped from 60 years for both sexes to 37 years for men and 34 for women in the past decade, and that 1,7 million people are now living with HIV. Zimbabwe is close to meeting the criteria for invoking the declaration, endorsed at the UN Summit in September 2005, that there is an international "responsibility to protect" people facing crimes against humanity.

Parliament expresses its deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe, the cholera epidemic, the hunger and the complete refusal of the Mugabe regime to respond positively to the crisis. It calls on the Council and Commission to reaffirm their commitment to the Zimbabwean people through a substantial, long-term programme of humanitarian aid. Noting that the EU has just released EUR 10 million in aid, it calls on the Zimbabwean authorities to lift all restrictions on humanitarian aid agencies and to ensure that humanitarian aid can be delivered in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

At the same time, Parliament firmly condemns the continuing violence perpetrated by the Mugabe regime against members and supporters of the MDC. It is outraged by the spate of recent abductions of human rights defenders and calls for their immediate release.

Members welcome the recent extension of the Union's list of banned individuals in the Mugabe regime, and call for further names of key Mugabe loyalists to be added thereto, including that of Florence Chituro, a former senior ZANU-PF minister, who is now believed to be living in London, refusing to condemn Mr Mugabe and travelling to and from Zimbabwe without hindrance. They call on the UN Security Council to consider imposing targeted sanctions (travel bans and asset freezes) on Mr Mugabe and persons actively engaged in violence or human rights infringements. In particular, Members call on China, Russia and South Africa to support strong measures against the Mugabe regime in the UN Security Council and to indicate to African governments that they are no longer willing to lend any support to the Mugabe regime. They applaud the integrity of the governments of Kenya, Botswana and Zambia for speaking out against Mr Mugabe, and express its profound disappointment that so many other African governments are still prepared to turn a blind eye to the evils of his regime.

Parliament expresses grave concern that the desperate need for immediate, radical and democratic change for the Zimbabwean people continues to be frustrated by the oppressive, manipulative, and self-serving Mugabe regime. It calls urgently for increased pressure by African countries and regional institutions,

including the SADC and, in particular, by the African Union, as well as by eminent Africans, to secure a fair, just solution to the Zimbabwe situation based on the credible elections held in March 2008, and to monitor any political agreement in a balanced way.

The Council is asked to encourage the African Union to prepare contingencies for active intervention, in order to protect Zimbabwe's civilian population. Parliament calls on the Council to remain vigilant in relation to the possible consequences for the region of ZANU-PF's deliberate neglect and misgovernance that is destabilising Zimbabwe.

Lastly, Parliament strongly appeals to all stakeholders and the international community to be prepared to support the economic and social recovery of Zimbabwe once a government has been formed which genuinely reflects the will of the Zimbabwean people at all levels and once there are tangible signs of a return to respect for democracy, human rights and rule of law.