Resolution on expulsions of NGOs from Darfur

2009/2556(RSP) - 12/03/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate on 10 March 2009, the European Parliament adopted by 55 votes to 1 with 2 abstentions, a resolution on expulsions of NGOs from Darfur. The resolution had been tabled by the EPP-ED, PES, Greens/ALE, ALDE, and UEN groups.

Parliament strongly condemns the expulsion of 13 humanitarian aid agencies from Darfur in response to the international arrest warrant issued by the ICC against President al-Bashir on 4 March 2009. It demands the immediate and unconditional release of all the aid workers of the Belgian section of Médecines sans Frontières, who were kidnapped on 11 March 2009 in the offices of Médecines sans Frontières Belgium in Saraf Umra, 200 kilometres to the west of El-Facher, the capital of North Darfur.

Parliament is very concerned at the immediate impact of the expulsions on the provision of the humanitarian aid that is vital to hundreds of thousands of people. It notes that aid agencies in Darfur are running the largest humanitarian operation in the world. The United Nations reports that up to 4.7 million people, including 2.7 million internally displaced people are in need of assistance. The expulsion of the aid agencies could lead to increased mortality and morbidity resulting from the interruption of health services and outbreaks of infectious diseases, such as diarrhoea and respiratory infections. The consequences of the expulsion may include declining immunisation coverage and increasing mortality among children if they do not have access to therapeutic feeding and nutrition services

Members demand that the Government of Sudan immediately reverse its decision to expel the 13 aid agencies and allow them to continue their essential work in ensuring the survival of vulnerable populations in Darfur. They call on the Council and Commission to step up their efforts vis-à-vis the African Union, the League of Arab States and China to prevail upon the Sudanese Government to do so.

The resolution calls on the Sudanese Government to take positive steps to ensure that human rights defenders in Sudan are not persecuted if they speak favourably of the ICC decision, and to refrain from any harassment or intimidation of human rights defenders.