

Resolution on support for the Special Court for Sierra Leone

2009/2580(RSP) - 24/04/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 381 votes to 4 with 7 abstentions a resolution on support for the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The resolution had been tabled by the EPP-ED, PES, Greens/ALE, GUE/NGL, UEN and ALDE groups. It recalls that the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) the mandate of the SCSL will end in 2010, and the Government of Sierra Leone has indicated that it is not in a position to enforce the sentences of the persons convicted by the SCSL. Other tribunals and courts, such as the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia are likely to face the same problem. The SCSL has concluded agreements with states including UK, Sweden and Austria to ensure that some of the convicted persons serve their sentences in these countries, and more agreements are needed to ensure that all persons already convicted, and those that are standing trial and may face convictions, actually serve their sentences.

Parliament welcomes the progress made by international courts and tribunals in bringing to trial those responsible for atrocities committed, and believes that these trials send a clear message to leaders around the world and to other war criminals that egregious human rights abuses will no longer be tolerated with impunity. It calls on the Council and the Member States to find a solution together with the SCSL in order to ensure that the persons convicted serve their sentences, since without such a solution the effort of the SCSL and the credibility of the international community, including the Union, will be severely undermined.

The resolution calls on all Member States to increase their contribution to the work of the international courts and tribunals as they seek to finalise a sustainable solution for the enforcement of sentences, whether by concluding agreements directly with the said institutions for the enforcement of sentences in the Member States' jurisdictions or by helping them to find alternative solutions to ensure the enforcement of sentences in the regions themselves.

It also calls on Member States and other international institutions to provide further financial assistance to the SCSL with a view to enabling those convicted by the SCSL to serve out their sentences in countries that have the capacity to enforce sentences in accordance with international standards but lack the financial means to do so. Parliament considers that a lack of assistance and support will put the work of international courts and tribunals at great risk as they will not be able to ensure that the persons convicted serve the sentences imposed.

Lastly, it calls for a comprehensive study evaluating the work done by international criminal tribunals, drawing lessons from it and putting forward recommendations on how to improve their functioning and future financing.