Resolution on violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo

2009/2792(RSP) - 17/12/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The resolution had been tabled by the EPP, S&D, ALDE, Greens/ALE, and ECR groups.

The conflict affecting the DRC has claimed the lives of 5 400 000 people since 1998 and is still causing as many as 45 000 deaths every month. There are some 1 460 000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the DRC, including 980 000 in North Kivu.

Parliament **deplores in the strongest possible terms the massacres, the crimes against humanity,** the recruitment of child soldiers and the acts of sexual violence against women and girls which are still taking place and calls on all actors to step up the fight against impunity. It calls for an **immediate end to the violence** and human rights abuses in the DRC, stressing the need for further efforts to put an end to the activities of foreign armed groups in the east of the DRC, in particular the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and the Lords Resistance Army (LRA). These groups are called upon immediately to lay down their arms and cease their attacks against the civilian population. All the parties to the 23 March 2009 agreements must respect the ceasefire and implement their commitments effectively and in good faith.

Members remain extremely concerned by the **worsening humanitarian situation in eastern DRC,** following the atrocities carried out against the local population. They are concerned, in particular, by recent reports of deliberate killings by Congolese soldiers of at least 270 civilians in the towns of Nyabiondo and Pinga, in North Kivu, and recent fighting, which has driven 21 800 people from their homes in and around Dongo, in the west. Swift action is necessary to prevent a new humanitarian catastrophe unfolding. Parliament stresses the need for increased funding in humanitarian aid to eastern DRC, given the increasing number of internally displaced persons and deteriorating conditions. It supports the appeal launched on 30 November 2009 by the UN, alongside 380 aid organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), to raise USD 7.1 billion for humanitarian work in 2010, urging all Member States to contribute their fair share. Members deplore the increasing acts of violence against aid workers, which is having serious repercussions for the humanitarian situation on the ground. They urge the authorities to launch thorough investigations into each and every incident and calls for protection to be immediately stepped up.

The resolution draws attention to the **UN mission in the DRC's (MONUC's) vital role** and calls for every effort to be made to allow it to carry out its mandate in full in order to protect those under threat. Parliament calls on the Council, in this connection, to play a leading role in ensuring that the United Nations Security Council supports MONUC in its operational capacities, providing a better definition of its priorities, of which there are currently 41. It stresses the need to bring to justice the perpetrators of human rights abuses within the Congolese armed forces, and underlines MONUC's crucial role in doing this, welcoming the zero tolerance policy promoted by President Kabila against sexual violence and misconduct in the armed forces.

Parliament underlines the importance of EUSEC RD Congo's key tasks of providing advice and assistance for defence reform with the aim of implementing the Congolese revised reform plan for the Congolese armed forces (FARDC). It calls on the Congolese authorities, therefore, to take the reform process forward, encourages the establishment of a coordination mechanism for defence reform under Congolese

ownership, with appropriate support from EUSEC and encourages the building of military barracks and camps as a matter of urgency. Parliament further stresses that the reform of the judicial system (incorporating a prevention and protection dimension and combating impunity with regard to sexual violence) and assistance for victims should be central to the aid programmes to be funded. In this context, calls for the cases of mass rape in the east of the DRC to be referred to the International Criminal Court.

Members move on to state that they remain concerned by the **illegal trade in minerals** and other natural resources in the east of the DRC by the rebel groups. This illegal mineral trade allows many actors to continue to buy minerals from areas controlled by rebel groups, thereby financing those rebel groups, and this is a factor exacerbating the conflict. DRC troops and fighters belonging to the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) are reported to be involved in criminal networks selling gold and minerals for guns in the east of the DRC. Accordingly, Parliament calls on the Council and the Commission to insist, in talks with the governments of the DRC and neighbouring countries, on the implementation of **effective systems of traceability and proof of origin of natural resources**, and to step up the fight against corruption.

Lastly, Members encourage all governments of the Great Lakes region and the international community to continue the existing dialogue with the aim of coordinating efforts to stop the violence in the eastern parts of the DRC, paying particular attention to reconciliation, human security, better judicial accountability, and refugee and IDP return and integration. They welcome the progress made in the region by improved bilateral diplomatic relations between the DRC and Rwanda, calling on both parties to implement the Nairobi and Goma peace agreements, as well as the Ihusi agreement of 23 March 2009.