Resolution on the mass atrocities in Jos, Nigeria

2010/2660(RSP) - 06/05/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the mass atrocities in Jos, Nigeria, The resolution had been tabled by the Greens/ALE, S&D, EPP, ECR and ALDE groups. Shocked by the outbreaks of violence in January and March of this year in and around Jos, which lies at the crossroads between Nigeria's Muslim north and Christian south, during which many hundreds of people were killed in religious and ethnic clashes. Members strongly condemn the recent violence and the tragic loss of lives in and extend their sympathies to the bereaved and injured. They urge all parties to exercise restraint and seek peaceful means to resolve differences between religious and ethnic groups in Nigeria.

The resolution notes that the problems in the area of Jos stem from a lack of economic development, from the adverse effects of climate change, and from the tension rooted in decades of resentment between indigenous groups, mostly Christian or animist, vying for control of fertile farmland with migrants and settlers from the Hausa-speaking Muslim north. It calls on the Nigerian Federal Government to:

- carry out an investigation into the causes of the most recent violence and ensure that the perpetrators of acts of violence are brought to justice in a fair and transparent manner;
- take concrete and urgent measures to support inter-ethnic and inter-faith dialogue. Members welcome the initiative by acting President Goodluck Jonathan to bring religious and community leaders together;
- protect its people by conducting regular patrols throughout the region and to address the root causes of the violence by guaranteeing equal rights for all citizens and by tackling problems relating to control of fertile farmland, access to resources, unemployment, poverty and climate change mitigation.

Parliament urges the EU to continue its political dialogue with Nigeria under Article 8 of the revised Cotonou Agreement and to address issues relating to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, as enshrined in universal, regional and national human rights instruments. It notes also that the EU is a major financial donor to Nigeria, and on 12 November 2009 the Commission and the Nigerian Federal Government signed the Nigeria-EC Country Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme for the period 2008-2013, under which the EU will fund projects aimed, inter alia, at securing peace and security and human rights.

Members call for a **wider examination of the root causes of the conflict**, including social, economic and ethnic tensions, and for care to be taken to avoid broad and simplistic explanations based only on religion that will not provide the basis for a long-term and lasting solution to the problems of this region.

Lastly, they call on the Nigerian authorities to reverse the recent move by some Nigerian state governors to execute death-row inmates to ease overcrowding in prisons, which would constitute a gross violation of human rights. The state governors are asked to exercise restraint and continue the de facto moratorium, and Parliament recalls that the use of the death penalty is contrary to Nigeria's commitments at international level.