Resolution on the situation in Nigeria

2012/2550(RSP) - 15/03/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in Nigeria. The resolution was tabled by the S&D, EFD, ECR, Greens/EFA, ALDE and EPP groups. It strongly condemns the recent violence – in particular the attacks carried out by the terrorist Islamist sect Boko Haram – and the tragic loss of lives in the stricken regions of Nigeria, stating that it is appalled by these attacks, which killed at least 185 people in Kano on 20 January 2012, and largely targeted police posts. Members note that Boko Haram warned Kano residents, in a leaflet distributed around the city overnight, that their strikes against security services would continue and urged perseverance as the group fights to install an 'Islamic system'. They urge all communities to exercise restraint and seek peaceful means to resolve differences between religious and ethnic groups in Nigeria. The Nigerian government is urged to end the violence as quickly as possible, and particularly to **crack down on Boko Haram**, which is boosting its strength by exploiting deep-seated religious tension in Nigeria.

Members underline the importance of regional cooperation for addressing the threat posed by a **possible connection between Boko Haram and Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb** (AQMI) and they encourage the countries in the region to deepen their cooperation in order to prevent synergies between Boko Haram and AQMI. The EU institutions and Member States are asked to lend their support to these regional efforts.

Parliament also strongly condemns the killing of British citizen Chris McManus and Italian national Franco Lamolinara – two engineers working for an Italian construction company who had been held hostage by AQMI for 10 months in northern Nigeria – during a failed rescue attempt on 8 March 2012. It calls for a **wider examination of the root causes of the conflict**, including social, economic and ethnic tensions, and to avoid broad and simplistic explanations based only on religion. The Federal Government must address the root causes of the violence by ensuring equal rights for all citizens and by addressing problems involving the control of fertile farmland, unemployment and poverty, and fight corruption, and inequality. Members appeal to the authorities to address the genuine grievances of citizens living in areas in the north of the country that are much poorer than some wealthier southern states, and prioritise the improvement of their dire living conditions, while not overlooking states with similar problems in the south.

Parliament underlines that obstacles still exist in many parts of the world that impede the free profession of faith or belief and calls on High Representative Ashton and on the Commission to insist on such issues in the context of its relevant initiatives concerning human rights. It also urges the HR/VP and the EU to:

- undertake measures in Nigeria combining diplomacy with long-term development cooperation in order to achieve peace, security, good governance and respect for human rights;

- continue political dialogue with Nigeria under **Article 8 of the revised Cotonou Agreement,** and in that context to address issues relating to universal human rights, including freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, and non-discrimination on any ground, as enshrined in universal, regional and national human rights instruments.

Lastly, Parliament draws attention to the **Nigerian oil sector**, and calls on the Nigerian authorities and foreign companies to help strengthen governance in the extractives sector abide by the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and **publish what companies pay to the Nigerian Government.** It also stresses the need for the Nigerian authorities and multinational oil companies to do their utmost to bring ongoing contamination to an end, and to implement the United Nations Environment Programme's recommendations in order to address environmental damage that has resulted from oil pollution.