Resolution on the persecution of Rohingya Muslims in Burma/Myanmar

2012/2784(RSP) - 13/09/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the persecution of Rohingya Muslims in Burma /Myanmar.

The resolution was tabled by the ECR, S&D, GUE/NGL, EPP Greens/EFA and ALDE groups.

It notes that since the new government of President Thein Sein took office in March 2011, it has taken numerous steps to expand civil liberties in the country, but that **discrimination against the Rohingya minority has intensified**. On 28 May 2012 the rape and murder of a Buddhist woman set off a chain of deadly clashes between the majority Rakhine Buddhist population and the minority Rohingya Muslim community in Rakhine State, leaving dozens of people dead, thousands of homes destroyed and over 70 000 people internally displaced. Parliament is alarmed at the continuing ethnic violence in western Burma, and expresses its concern that these intercommunal clashes **may put at risk the transition to democracy in Burma/Myanmar**. It calls on all parties to exercise restraint, and urges the Burmese authorities **to stop arbitrary arrests of Rohingya**, to provide information on the whereabouts of the hundreds of people detained since security operations in Rakhine State began in June 2012, and immediately to release those arbitrarily arrested.

Members call on the government of Burma/Myanmar to allow the UN agencies and humanitarian NGOs, as well as journalists and diplomats, unhindered access to all areas of Rakhine State, guarantee unrestricted access to humanitarian aid for all affected populations, and ensure that displaced Rohingya enjoy freedom of movement and are permitted to return to their place of residence once it is safe for them to do so. They call on the EEAS to support the Burmese government by all possible means in its efforts to stabilise the situation, implement programmes promoting reconciliation, design a broader socio-economic development plan for Rakhine State, and continue Burma/Myanmar's progress towards democracy.

Parliament notes that the Rohingya, many of whom have been settled in Rakhine State for centuries, have not been recognised as one of Burma/Myanmar's 135 national groups, and have thus been denied citizenship rights under the 1982 Citizenship Law. They are perceived by many Burmese to be illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, and have been subject to systematic and severe discrimination. Parliament insists that **the Rohingya minority cannot be left out of the newly developing openness for a multicultural Burma/Myanmar**, and calls on the government to amend the 1982 citizenship law, with a view to granting citizens' rights to the Rohingya and other stateless minorities, as well as ensuring equal treatment for all Burmese citizens.

Members urge the Burmese government to allow the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in the country to conduct an **independent investigation** into the abuses in Rakhine State, and they want the OHCHR to establish an office in Burma/Myanmar with a full protection, promotion, and technical assistance mandate, as well as sub-offices in states around the country, including Rakhine State.

Lastly, Parliament urges **Bangladesh**, which has instructed humanitarian NGOs to suspend their aid to the Rohingya, to continue its acceptance of present donor support, and to allow the humanitarian aid organisations to continue their work in the country, especially in the light of the events in Rakhine State and the resultant additional flows of refugees in dire need of basic care.