Resolution on the situation in Burma/Myanmar, particularly the continuing violence in Rakhine State

2012/2878(RSP) - 22/11/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in Burma/Myanmar.

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

It **expresses concern at the continuing violence in Rakhine State**, with at least 110 000 people having been forced to flee their homes since June 2012, and with 89 people killed and more than 5 300 homes and religious buildings destroyed since violence reignited in October. Most of the displaced are Rohingya, living in camps in unacceptable conditions. In the face of persistent violence, an estimated one million Rohingya have fled to neighbouring countries over the years. Parliament expresses its concern that the **intercommunal clashes may put at risk the country's transition to democracy and could have wider repercussions across the entire region.**

Whilst acknowledging the continuing political and civil rights reforms that are taking place in Burma, Parliament urges the authorities to intensify their efforts, including through the release of the remaining political prisoners, and to address intercommunal violence and its consequences as a matter of urgency. It believes that **the current upsurge in communal violence in Rakhine State is a consequence of longstanding discriminatory policies against the Rohingya**, and stresses that little has been done so far either to prevent or to address the root causes of communal tension and ethnic discrimination. Members note that local authorities have reportedly been **complicit in the attacks** against Rohingya and are pursuing an active policy of expelling them from the country. They also note the Government's assertions that it would carry out a full and independent investigation into the events and take action against the instigators of the violence. Members want the **EU and Member States to provide humanitarian assistance** and support the Burmese Government in its efforts to stabilise the situation and more rapidly implement reform programmes in ways that embed the rule of law, respect for human rights and political freedom. They welcome the Council conclusions on Burma/Myanmar of 23 April 2012, which include the suspension of restrictive measures imposed on the Government, with the exception of the arms embargo, and the EU's wish to continue its support to the country's transition. Parliament also welcomes the recent visit of the President of the European Commission and the immediate increase in the Commission's humanitarian funding for 2012 to help the people of Rakhine State, noting that Burma was offered EUR 78 million in EU development aid and that **the EU stands ready to mobilise EUR 4 million for immediate humanitarian aid, provided access to the affected areas is guaranteed**. In this connection, Parliament calls on the Government of Burma/Myanmar to provide UN agencies and humanitarian NGOs, as well as journalists and diplomats, with unhindered access to all areas of the country, including Rakhine State, and to give unrestricted access to humanitarian aid for all affected populations, and further calls on the Burmese authorities to improve conditions in the Rohingya displacement camps as a matter of urgency.

Parliament calls on the Government of Burma/Myanmar to take immediate measures to put an end to ethnic violence and discrimination and to bring the perpetrators of the violent clashes in Rakhine State to justice. The Government is also urged to end discriminatory practices against the Rohingya, with Members reiterating Parliament's earlier calls for **amendment or repeal of the 1982 Citizenship Law to ensure that the Rohingya have equal access to Burmese citizenship**. The resolution recalls in this connection, the letter from President Thein Sein to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of 16 November 2012, in which the President of Burma/Myanmar pledged to consider granting citizenship to the stateless

Rohingya Muslims. It also recalls declarations by various representatives of the Burmese Government and opposition, including Aung San Suu Kyi, **denying the Rohingya ethnic minority citizens' rights and minimising the responsibility of the state authorities in the recent violent clashes.** However, Parliament urges all political forces to take a clear stand in favour of a pluralist society with an inclusive dialogue with local communities. It urges the Burmese authorities to take more vigorous action on the issues of citizens' rights, notably access to education, work permits and freedom of movement for the Rohingya minority.

Lastly, Parliament welcomes the proposals made by the Rule of Law Committee of the Burmese Parliament and urges the Government to swiftly implement legislative, institutional, and policy reforms to end serious human rights violations in areas affected by ethnic and other armed conflicts and to tackle the ongoing impunity for human rights abuses, particularly where they are committed by state forces.