Resolution on the situation in Iraq

2014/2716(RSP) - 17/07/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in Iraq.

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

It strongly condemned the attacks perpetrated by the jihadist al-Qaeda splinter group Islamic State (IS) – formerly the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) – against Iraqi citizens and the Iraqi state, leading to summary executions, the imposition of a harsh interpretation of Sharia law, the destruction of places of the Shiite, Sufi, Sunni and Christian places of worship and shrines, of the region's historic, cultural and artistic heritage, and other atrocities. Members condemned attacks directed at civilian targets, including hospitals, schools and places of worship, and the use of executions and sexual violence in the conflict. Underlining the fact that there should be no impunity for the perpetrators of these acts, Members were deeply concerned about the humanitarian crisis and the massive displacement of civilians. They rejected without reservation and considered illegitimate the announcement by the IS leadership that it had established a caliphate in the areas it now controlled.

Whilst supporting the Iraqi authorities in the fight against IS terrorism and other armed/terrorist groups, Parliament emphasised that the security response needed to be combined with a **sustainable political solution involving all the components of Iraqi society and addressing their legitimate grievances**. It noted that the rapid surge of the IS had revealed the fragility of the Iraqi army and institutions which were plagued by corruption, sectarianism and the exclusivist policies of the government of the Prime Minister, Nuri al-Maliki, which had led to substantial alienation of the Sunni and other minorities in Iraq. Members felt that the parliamentary elections held in Iraq on 30 April 2014 presented an opportunity to create a truly representative government with an inclusive agenda and they urged all political leaders, especially Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, to make sure that an inclusive government representing the political, religious and ethnic diversity of Iraqi society, was formed in order to stop the bloodshed and the fragmentation of the country. The Iraqi Government must reach out to the Sunni minority and reorganise the army in an inclusive, non-sectarian and non-partisan way.

With regard to the **Kurds,** Parliament took note of the announcement by the Kurdistan Regional Government of a referendum for independence, but it appealed to the parliament and the President of Iraqi Kurdistan, Massoud Barzani, to uphold an inclusive process in respect of the rights of the non-Kurdish minorities living in the province.

EU action required: Members stressed that the EU should develop a comprehensive policy approach to the region and, notably, that **Iran, Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states need to be included as essential players in any de-escalation effort in Syria and Iraq**. Members recalled that the IS was receiving funds from wealthy donors, particularly in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. The President of Iran, Hassan Rouhani, has indicated readiness to cooperate with the US in countering the IS threat in Iraq, while extremist Sunni armed groups in the region, including the IS, have been receiving ideological support over the past years from actors in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf.

Parliament welcomed the EU's decision of 19 June 2014 to **increase its humanitarian assistance to Iraq** by EUR 5 million to provide basic assistance to displaced people, thus bringing humanitarian funding for Iraq to EUR 12 million so far in 2014. It reaffirmed the EU's commitment to strengthening its relationship with Iraq, including through the implementation of the EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), and building on the experiences and achievements of the EUJUST LEX-Iraq mission.

Lastly, Members were concerned at reports of hundreds of foreign fighters, including **citizens of EU Member States, having joined the IS insurgency,** and called for international cooperation in order to take appropriate legal action against any individuals suspected of being involved in acts of terrorism. All regional actors must do everything in their power to stop all activities by official or private bodies to propagate and spread extreme Islamist ideologies in words and acts. The international community, especially the EU, was called upon to facilitate a regional dialogue on the problems facing the Middle East and include all significant parties, in particular Iran and Saudi Arabia.