Resolution on Burundi, in particular the case of Pierre Claver Mbonimpa

2014/2833(RSP) - 18/09/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on Burundi, in particular the case of Pierre Claver Mbonimpa.

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

It firmly condemned the detention of human rights defender Pierre Claver Mbonimpa who was once again arrested on 15 May 2014 and had been in pre-trial detention since he was taken in for questioning. Members felt that the arrest of Pierre Mbonimpa was representative of the mounting risks facing human rights defenders. They noted the view of the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights that harassment of activists and journalists and the arbitrary arrest of opposition party members had been **largely been carried out by the Imbonerakure** (the youth wing of the ruling party CNDD-FDD). They also recalled that the charges against Pierre Claver Mbonimpa related to comments he made on 6 May 2014 (and echoed by the UN office in Burundi) that the youth wing of the ruling party CNDD-FDD was being **armed and sent to the Democratic Republic of Congo** (DRC) for military training. In these circumstances, Parliament urged the Burundian Government to take measures to **control the CNDD-FDD youth league,** preventing its members from intimidating and attacking perceived opponents, and also called for an **independent international investigation** into the claims that the CNDD-FDD arms and trains its youth wing.

It called on the Government of Burundi to allow **genuine political debate to take place ahead of the elections in 2015** and refrain from interfering in the internal management of the opposition parties, from placing restrictions on campaigning for all parties, especially in rural areas, and from abusing the judiciary to exclude political rivals.

Parliament went on to recall that Burundi was bound by the human rights clause of the Cotonou Agreement, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and therefore had an obligation to respect universal human rights, including freedom of expression. It asked the Commission to consider launching consultations with Burundi under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement with a view to **possible suspension from the Agreement** and to take any appropriate measures while they are conducted. Members urged the EU High Representative and Member States to ensure that there was **a clear and principled EU policy vis-à-vis Burundi** that addressed the ongoing serious human rights violations, in line with the EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights.

Lastly, Parliament called on the **countries of the Great Lakes region** to address the unlawful activities of the Imbonerakure and jointly address such problems with the Government of Burundi. It was deeply concerned at the economic and social situation facing the population of Burundi as a whole, and called on Great Lakes countries to intensify their efforts on regional economic development, paying special attention to reconciliation, respect for human rights, the fight against impunity, and the establishment of better judicial accountability.