Resolution on Burundi: the case of Bob Rugurika

2015/2561(RSP) - 12/02/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on Burundi: the case of Bob Rugurika.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE, GUE/NGL, Greens/EFA and EFDD groups.

Parliament recalled that on 20 January 2015 the Burundian authorities arrested and detained the human rights defender Bob Rugurika, director of Radio Publique Africaine (RPA), following his refusal to reveal his sources days after his radio station broadcast a series of investigative reports concerning the killing in September 2014 of three elderly Italian nuns, in Kamenge, a town north of Bujumbura. Parliament condemned the unjustified detention of Bob Rugurika and called for his immediate and unconditional release. It called on the authorities at the same time to continue their investigations into the tragic killing of the three Italian nuns and to bring those responsible to justice.

Parliament denounced all human rights violations in Burundi and called on the Burundian authorities to ensure an appropriate and fair balance between freedom of the media, including the freedom of journalists to investigate and report on crimes, and the need to ensure the integrity of criminal investigations.

In addition, Members called on the Burundian Government to:

- allow a genuine and open political debate in the run-up to the 2015 elections;
- respect the electoral calendar, and to include the opposition parties in the monitoring of the elections;
- take measures to control intimidation and attacks on perceived opponents.

Electoral process: Parliament encouraged all those involved in the electoral process, including the bodies responsible for organising the elections and the security services, to respect the commitments made in the Arusha Agreement which put an end to the civil war in this country.

It underlined the leading role the EU should play in monitoring the pre-electoral situation so as to avoid any going back on commitments which could have a serious effect not only on the democratisation process but also on peace and security in Burundi and throughout the Great Lakes Region.

European policy as regards Burundi: Parliament called on the Commission, the Vice-President/High Representative and the Member States to continue working towards a clear and principled EU policy vis-à-vis Burundi that addresses the ongoing serious human rights violations. Clear and concrete benchmarks shall be established to measure developments of the situation in this country and a strategy for responding to them.

The European Union and the Member States are called upon to release the funds required to address the humanitarian situation in this part of the world and to work in collaboration with UN bodies in particular on the chronic malnutrition situation. Parliament asked the Commission to allocate its funds for the 2014-2020 period as a matter of priority to the NGOs and international organisations that work directly with the people in this country.

Lastly, Parliament called on the Burundian Government, the opposition party leaders and civil society activists to do their utmost to support the Peace and Reconciliation Commission (PRC) in a democratic and transparent way in order to deal with past crimes and move forward to prepare the future. This country continues to face its worst political crisis since it emerged from a 12-year civil.