

Resolution on the situation in Burundi

2015/2723(RSP) - 09/07/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

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

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

Gravely concerned about the worsening political and humanitarian situation in Burundi and the wider region, Parliament called for an immediate end to violence and political intimidation of opponents and the immediate disarmament of all armed youth groups allied to political parties.

It condemned the decision of the Burundian Government to go ahead with the elections despite the critical prevailing political and excessive use of force against demonstrators. **It urged the Burundian authorities to postpone the presidential elections set for 15 July 2015.**

It called on all those involved in the electoral process, including the bodies responsible for organising elections and the security services, to honour the commitments made in the Arusha Agreement, which put an end to the civil war. It emphasised, once again, that only through dialogue and consensus, involving the Burundian Government, opposition and civil society in accordance with the Arusha Agreement and the Burundian Constitution, could a lasting political solution be found.

EU Burundi relations: Members recalled that the EU's partnership with Burundi was governed by the Cotonou Agreement, and that all parties are bound to respect and implement the terms of that agreement, in particular respect for human rights. They called on the Government of Burundi, therefore, to allow genuine and open political debate to take place without fear of intimidation, and to refrain from misusing the judiciary to exclude political rivals.

They also asked the Commission **to reassess EU aid as a matter of urgency** with a view to diverting it, to increasing financial support for civil society and to focusing on humanitarian aid as opposed to central budget support.

Restrictive measures: Members joined the Foreign Affairs Council of 22 June 2015 in calling for a list of targeted restrictive measures and visa and travel bans against those responsible for acts of violence, repression and serious human rights violations, together with those who are actively impeding a political solution. They also asked the VP/HR to take the necessary measures to **freeze the assets** of all of these individuals in the EU Member States.

Intimidation: Parliament expressed its deep concern at the number of victims and the number of cases of serious human rights violations reported since the beginning of the crisis, particularly those abuses attributed to members of the Imbonerakure (CNDD-FDD youth militia). It demanded that the violence and intimidation exercised by the Imbonerakure be brought to an immediate end called on the CNDD-FDD to disarm the youth militia.

Members reiterated that there could be no impunity for those responsible for serious human rights violations, and noted that attempts by certain forces to transform the riots into an ethnic conflict were failing, and that political divisions in Burundi are not explicitly ethnic.

Parliament invited the International Criminal Court prosecutor to monitor media closely for incitement to ethnic hatred, as well as speeches by political leaders. It reiterated, in this context, the importance of abiding by the Code of Conduct in Electoral Matters and the UN-brokered election roadmap to prevent a further increase in political violence.

Lifting of restrictions on access to the internet: Members called for the immediate lifting of restrictions on the media and access to the internet, and denounced once again the repeated targeting of Radio Publique Africaine, which served as one of the country's principal news outlets. They considered that **legitimate elections could not take place unless media outlets were able to operate without restrictions.**

They welcomed the Commission's announcement of an additional EUR 1.5 million to ease the humanitarian situation. Parliament warned, however, that given the huge influx of refugees into an already fragile region, both the EU and its Member States, must redouble commitments as a matter of urgency reported outbreaks of cholera and alarming reports of sexual violence.

Lastly, it called on the EU and its Member States to deliver on all commitments to the UN Burundi Regional Refugee Response Plan.