

# Resolution on the mass displacement of children in Nigeria as a result of Boko Haram attacks

2015/2876(RSP) - 08/10/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 613 votes to 12 with 31 abstentions a resolution on the mass displacement of children in Nigeria as a result of Boko Haram attacks.

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

Parliament strongly condemned Boko Haram crimes, including terrorist raids and suicide bombings in Chad, Cameroon and Niger and deplored the acts that had led to the mass displacement of innocent children. It called for **immediate coordinated international action to assist the work of UN agencies and NGOs** in preventing displaced children and youths from being subjected to sexual slavery, other forms of sexual violence and kidnappings and from being forced into armed conflict against civilian, government and military targets in Nigeria by the Boko Haram terrorist sect.

Members stated that they believed that in the cases of children formerly associated with Boko Haram or other armed groups, **non-judicial measures should be considered as an alternative to prosecution and detention.**

Parliament welcomed the recent announcement by the Commission of additional funds to boost urgent humanitarian aid to the region. It expressed, however, serious concerns about the **funding gap between commitments and actual payments for UNICEF operations** in the region by the international community at large. In this respect, it noted that UNICEF has received only 32 % of the 50.3 million required this year for its humanitarian response across the Lake Chad region. It called on donors to meet their commitments without delay in order to address the chronic need for access to basic provisions such as drinking water, basic health care and education.

The Commission was urged to **prioritise assistance for uprooted children and youths** in Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger, with particular attention on protection from all forms of ferocity and gender violence and on access to education, healthcare and safe drinking water, within the framework of the Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa.

Furthermore, Parliament urged the international community to help Nigeria and the neighbouring countries that host refugees (Cameroon, Chad and Niger) to provide all necessary **medical and psychological assistance** to those in need. It appealed to the authorities in the sub-region to ensure ease of access to the **full range of sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls who had been raped**, stressing the need to implement a universal standard for the treatment of war rape victims and to ensure the primacy of international humanitarian law in situations of armed conflict. In this connection, Members noted that a number of the abducted women and girls who had escaped or had been rescued or freed return home pregnant and in dire need of reproductive and maternal health care, and others lacked access to basic post-rape health screening, post-traumatic care, social support and rape counselling.

In addition, Parliament called on the President of Nigeria and his newly appointed Federal Government to:

- adopt strong measures to protect the civilian population, to put special emphasis on the protection of women and girls, to make women's rights and children's rights a priority when fighting extremism;

- launch, as promised by President Buhari, an urgent, independent and thorough investigation into crimes under international law and other serious human rights violations by **all parties to the conflict, both terrorists and Nigerian security forces**. Parliament welcomed the pledge made by President Buhari to investigate evidence that Nigerian military forces have committed serious human rights violations, war crimes and acts which may constitute crimes against humanity;
- address the challenges involved in abiding by all campaign promises and the latest statements, the most important of which were defeating the terrorist threat, making respect for human rights and humanitarian law a central pillar of military operations, and **bringing back the Chibok girls** and all other abducted women and children.

Lastly, Parliament recalled that Boko Haram's origins were rooted in grievances over poor governance, pervasive corruption and stark inequalities in Nigerian society. It urged the Nigerian authorities to eliminate corruption, mismanagement and inefficiencies within the public institutions and the army, and to promote fair taxation. Members called for the adoption of **measures to starve Boko Haram of its sources of illegal income** through cooperation with neighbouring countries, in particular with regard to smuggling and trafficking.