Resolution on Nigeria

2016/2649(RSP) - 14/04/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on Nigeria. The resolution was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE, GUE/NGL, EFDD, and Greens/EFA groups.

Whilst welcoming the peaceful election of President Buhari in March 2015, Parliament was deeply concerned by the significant social, economic, political and security challenges facing Nigeria. It considered that poor economic governance, weak democratic institutions and massive inequality have held development back. Members called for the European Union and its Member States to fulfil their commitment to providing a comprehensive range of political, development and humanitarian assistance to support programmes at all levels of government that address poverty, youth unemployment and women's lack of empowerment. They further urges the VP/HR and Member States to remain committed to their diplomatic efforts in Nigeria, and in particular, to continue political dialogue with Nigeria under Article 8 of the revised Cotonou Agreement and, in that context, address issues relating to universal human rights, including freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, and non-discrimination on any grounds, as enshrined in universal, regional and national human rights instruments.

Abduction of girls and women: Parliament urged the Nigerian government and the international community to secure the release not only of the Chibok girls abducted on 14 April 2014, 15 of whom who were allegedly shown to be alive in a video posted on Wednesday by **Boko Haram**, but also of 400 women and children abducted from the town of Damasak in November 2014. It believed that the second anniversary of the abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls on should provide fresh impetus for the Nigerian Government and international community to secure their immediate and unconditional release.

It noted that Boko Haram has abducted more than 2 000 women and girls since 2009. Menbers expresses solidarity with the people of Nigeria who are suffering from the acts of terrorism perpetrated by Boko Haram, which have led to thousands of deaths and displaced more than two million people. They urged the Nigerian Government to:

- take all necessary measures to ensure the protection of its civilians;
- address the root causes of the violence by ensuring equal rights for all citizens, including by addressing the issues of inequality, control of fertile farmlands, unemployment and poverty;
- investigate, as promised, evidence that the Nigerian military might have committed human rights violations.

Corruption: regretting the lack of real progress in addressing the corruption which has blighted Nigerian society for decades, and noting that by some estimates, between USD 3 billion and 8 billion of Nigerian oil is stolen annually, Members commended the efforts made by the Buhari government in mandating that all government financial transactions pass through a single bank account in order to monitor spending. They called for the EU and its Member States to effectively **curb illicit financial flows and tax evasion and avoidance**, and to boost democratic international cooperation in tax matters.

Middle Belt region: noting that the Middle Belt region has suffered from years of economic and political tension between ethnic and religious communities, with the recent violence fuelled by competition for power and access to land between nomadic and farming communities, Parliament condemned the attacks on farmers and the inter-ethnic conflicts between cattle herders and farmers in the area. The Nigerian Government and international partners were asked to **increase investment in resolving intercommunal**

conflicts between cattle herders and farmers by supporting cooperation through shared economic and natural resource management initiatives.

LGBTI: Parliament called on the Nigerian Government and regional authorities to **stop criminalising the Nigerian LGBTI community** and to guarantee their right to freedom of expression. It noted that sexual and gender violence, and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people, is still rife in the troubled regions of northeastern Nigeria.

Lastly, Parliament requested that the Nigerian authorities **reject the bill** to prohibit frivolous petitions and other matters connected therewith, which is currently before the Nigerian Senate, as it undermines press freedom and freedom of expression in Nigeria.