Resolution on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

2016/3001(RSP) - 01/12/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

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

During the preceding months, human rights groups repeatedly reported on the **worsening situation of human rights and freedom of expression**, assembly and demonstration in the country in the run-up to elections, including the use of excessive force against peaceful demonstrators, journalists, political leaders and others. More than 50 people were reportedly killed during demonstrations on 19 and 20 September 2016 in Kinshasa and many others disappeared.

Parliament deplored the loss of lives during the demonstrations over the last few weeks. Deeply concerned at the increasingly unstable situation in the DRC in a tense pre-electoral context, it reminded the authorities of the DRC, and primarily its President, that it is their responsibility to protect citizens living anywhere in the national territory, and in particular to protect them against abuse and crimes.

Whereas President Kabila's term of office is ending on 20 December 2016 and that the next presidential and legislative elections were initially scheduled to be held by the end of 2016, Members deplored the failure of the government and the CENI (Independent National Electoral Commission) to hold the presidential election within the constitutional deadline.

Parliament insisted on the Congolese Government's responsibility to guarantee an environment conducive to **transparent, credible and inclusive elections** as soon as possible. It also recalled the commitment made by the DRC under the Cotonou Agreement to **respecting democracy, the rule of law and human rights principles**, which include freedom of expression and of the media, good governance and transparency in political office.

The resolution called for:

- the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners;
- the authorities to immediately lift all restrictions on the media;
- a full, thorough and transparent investigation into the alleged human rights violations that took place during the protests to identify those responsible and hold them accountable.

Parliament called on the European Union to:

- take more concrete actions and to immediately launch the procedure under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, and to adopt **targeted sanctions**, including a visa ban and asset freeze, against the senior officials and armed forces agents responsible for the violent repression of demonstrations and the political impasse which is preventing a peaceful and constitutional transition of power;
- **continue its assistance to the people of the DRC with a view to improving the living conditions of the most vulnerable populations** and tackling the consequences of displacement, food insecurity and natural disasters (more than 5 million people currently in need of food assistance).

The EU Delegation is called upon to continue to **closely monitor developments in the DRC** and to use all appropriate tools and instruments to support human rights defenders and pro-democracy movements.

Lastly, the VP/HR should **consider increasing the mediation capacities of the EU Delegation** to cooperate with the African Union in order to support a more inclusive political dialogue and prevent the deepening of the political crisis and the further spread of violence.