Resolution on the situation in the Central African Republic

2017/2507(RSP) - 19/01/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR).

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ECR and EFDD groups.

Members recalled that despite the political progress, the CAR has remained in the grip of instability and sporadic unrest, intensified by violent clashes in a number of locations which have led to multiple population displacements in the west, north and east of the country. They highlighted the following issues:

- the lack of civil liberties, gender inequality, restrictions on freedom of religion or belief and intercommunal tensions also remain serious human rights concerns in the CAR;
- the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) has up to 10 750 peacekeepers on the ground in the CAR, but some civilians complain that it does not do enough to protect them against dozens of armed groups;
- reconstruction of the justice sector is still in its infancy and police capacity continues to be extremely limited;
- since August 2016, an alarming increase in the number of cases of human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law perpetrated by the different factions of the ex-Séléka, the anti-Balaka and their affiliates has been recorded in the CAR, the results being at least 100 killings, forced civilian displacement and the destruction of property;
- according to estimations, 2.2 million people will be in need of humanitarian assistance this year, including 1.1 million children; at the end of 2016, an estimated 420 000 people were internally displaced and an additional 453 000 had sought refuge in neighbouring countries.

Parliament welcomed the efforts undertaken by President Touadéra and his government to foster peace and reconciliation in the Central African Republic, against the background of decades of underdevelopment and fragility and several years of armed conflict. It considered the peaceful holding of the combined elections on 14 February 2016 in the CAR, with a significant voter turnout, as a real success for the political transition process.

Parliament is convinced that **dialogue remains the only way to ensure lasting peace** in the conflict-affected regions of the CAR. In this regard, Members made the following recommendations:

Violation of human rights: the resolution condemned the violations and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law, which include arbitrary killings, sexual violence, inhuman treatment and all forms of attack, as well as aggressions and provocations against the civilian population and peacekeepers. It called on the Government of the CAR to launch prompt and **impartial investigations** into all alleged violations of human rights and humanitarian law, appropriately prosecute those responsible.

Parliament firmly supported the authority of the UN Secretary-General to implement the UN’s policy of transparency (zero tolerance) for allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse and welcomed the initiatives he has undertaken thus far in the CAR.

Security: Members stressed the need for reforms to transform the CAR's armed forces into a **professional, democratically controlled and ethnically representative army**. They welcomed the decision of the European Council of 19 April 2016 to establish a military training mission in the CAR (EUTM RCA) to contribute to the country's defence sector reform.

Justice system: Parliament invited the Government of the CAR, with the support of the international community, to invest significantly in its justice system, including **rebuilding its courts**, police force and prisons. It urged for immediate action be taken to counter impunity for war and other crimes and to help rebuild the justice system.

Humanitarian aid: owing to funding constraints, the World Food Programme (WFP) announced that it would need to make additional cuts to the food it can provide and that by February 2017 distribution could be suspended altogether. In this regard, Members urged donors, in this context, to respect their **commitments made to the WFP**, and to prevent any further deterioration of delivery of humanitarian aid. They called on the CAR to develop national policies and legislative frameworks that adequately protect the human rights of displaced persons, including freedom of movement.

Natural resources: the Central African authorities are urged to develop a nationally owned strategy to tackle the phenomena of illicit exploitation and trafficking networks affecting natural resources. Parliament suggested that the UN create a cell within MINUSCA to **fight trafficking in diamonds, timber, gold and ivory** and militarised poaching. It called on the international diamond companies to stop fuelling the conflict and human rights abuses by purchasing illicitly extracted and traded diamonds from the Central African Republic.