Resolution on the Democratic Republic of the Congo

2018/2515(RSP) - 18/01/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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

One year after the signature of the Saint-Sylvestre agreement on 31 December 2016, the general situation in the DRC is continuing to deteriorate throughout the country, with violent repression, killings and widespread human rights violations.

The political crisis has deepened following President Kabila's refusal to step down in 2016 at the end of his constitutionally mandated term. Under the Saint-Sylvestre agreement reached under the auspices of the National Episcopal Conference of Congo (CENCO), it was agreed to hold elections by December 2017. However, this deadline was not met and it was announced that the elections shall now be held on 23 December 2018.

2017 has been one of the most violent years in the DRC's recent history with the UN having classified the country's situation as a Level 3 humanitarian emergency, the highest level.

The DRC has the highest number of new internally displaced persons due to conflict recorded globally. Over 1.9 million people have been displaced inside the DRC since January 2017, bringing the total number of displaced people in the country to 4.25 million, mostly in Kasai, Tanganyika and Kivu provinces. The DRC is also hosting refugees fleeing Burundi, the Central African Republic and South Sudan. The EU has released EUR 5 million in emergency aid for the victims of violence in Kasai.

Parliament has also expressed concern about the rising abductions and attacks on aid workers and peacekeeping forces.

Reiterating its deep concern at the worsening humanitarian, political and security situation in the DRC, Parliament strongly condemned all human rights violations and acts of violence, in particular against peaceful demonstrators, including the ban on peaceful public demonstrations and the policies of intimidating, arresting and detaining any dissident voices.

The Congolese authorities are called on to:

- proceed with the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience and to conduct an independent investigation into the violent repression of the demonstrations of December 2017 and the mass graves discovered;
- fully respect legislative due process and to bring the draft laws into alignment with international and regional standards for the protection and promotion of human rights;
- fully respect the requirements set out in the Cotonou Agreement as well as in the Saint Sylvestre agreement, in particular the right of individuals to exercise freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and demonstration;
- end the use of child soldiers;
- strengthen the protection of women and children from rape, sexual violence and torture.

Parliament urged the EU and its Member States to:

- increase support to, and protection of, human rights defenders;
- give priority to human rights values. In this regard, it reiterated the importance of **holding individuals to account** for human rights abuses and other actions that undermine a peaceful solution to the DRC conflict;
- consider employing additional means if the situation continues to deteriorate and no significant progress is made towards finding a peaceful solution.
- increase humanitarian aid to tackle the escalating cholera outbreak;
- increase financial and humanitarian aid through reliable organisations in order to meet the urgent needs of the population;
- take the requisite measures against European companies that fail to comply with international standards or that do not adequately compensate victims of human rights violations for which they are directly or indirectly responsible.

Lastly, Parliament called for the rapid implementation of the agreement reached by the Member States on 15 June 2016 on the EU regulation on conflict minerals and for work to continue at EU and UN level to develop international legislation on this matter.