Resolution on the situation in Syria

2018/2626(RSP) - 15/03/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in Syria.

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

Syria's seven-year civil conflict continues, despite several international efforts to achieve a ceasefire and lay the basis for a negotiated solution. 13 million people, including 6 million children, are registered as in need of some form of humanitarian aid. 6.1 million people are internally displaced, 3 million civilians live in besieged areas and over 5 million are registered Syrian refugees residing in neighbouring regions. 400 000 Syrian lives have been lost during the conflict.

Various areas and cities such as Idlib, Eastern Ghouta, Yarmouk, Foua, and Kefraya have long suffered blockades with serious consequences for the civilian population and no possibility to deliver humanitarian aid in a sustainable way due to the military offensive and bombardments by the Syrian regime against its own people with the support of Russia and Iran.

Eastern Ghouta has been under siege by the Syrian regime and its allies for five years causing hundreds of deaths in the area. The situation in Eastern Ghouta is so critical that the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, has described it as 'hell on earth'.

The situation in Syria and the lack of a comprehensive, genuine and inclusive political transition continues to impede the full implementation of the EU strategy on Syria, and in particular the substantial assistance that the Union can provide for the reconstruction of the country.

Parliament noted that since the outbreak of the war, the EU and its Member States have mobilised more than EUR 10.4 billion towards addressing the humanitarian needs resulting from the Syrian crisis, both internally and externally in the neighbouring region, making the EU the largest donor.

However, it strongly condemned all atrocities and the widespread violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed during the conflict, and in particular the acts perpetrated by forces of the Assad regime, including with the support of its allies Russia and Iran, as well as by the UN-listed terrorist organisations.

It condemned the ongoing violence in Eastern Ghouta, despite the unanimous adoption of UNSC Resolution 2401 (calling for a **30-day cessation of hostilities in Syria to enable humanitarian aid delivery**) and urgently called on all parties, and in particular on the Assad regime, Russia and Iran, to fully and urgently implement and respect that resolution, ensuring the immediate, safe, unimpeded and sustained delivery of humanitarian assistance, the evacuation of the critically ill and wounded, and the alleviation of the suffering of the Syrian people.

The resolution reminded the regimes of **Syria, Russia and Iran** that they are responsible under international law for the heinous crimes they continue to commit in Syria, and that those perpetrating such crimes, be they states or individuals, will be held to account.

Parliament also expressed deep concern at **Turkey's intervention** in areas of Syria which are controlled by Kurdish forces and called on the Turkish Government to withdraw its troops and play a constructive role in the Syrian conflict.

It stressed that there should be no tolerance or impunity for the horrific crimes committed in Syria, including those committed against religious, ethnic and other groups and minorities. It reiterated its call for **independent, impartial, thorough and credible investigations and prosecutions** of those responsible and supports the work of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) on international crimes committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2012.

Convinced that there can be no effective conflict resolution or sustainable peace in Syria without accountability for the crimes committed, Parliament called for the adoption of an **EU accountability strategy towards the atrocity crimes** committed in Syria.

Lastly, Parliament called for **targeted sanctions** to be imposed on Russia and Iranian officials following their targeted and deliberate actions against the civilian populations in Eastern Ghouta as well as in the rest of Syria.