Resolution on the situation in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya

2021/2874(RSP) - 16/09/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 377 votes to 115, with 192 abstentions, a resolution on the situation in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya.

Kenya hosts the second largest number of refugees and asylum seekers in Africa after Ethiopia. The Kakuma camp is located in Turkana county, one of the poorest counties in Kenya. It has dire living conditions which have been worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, armed robberies, thefts, rapes and killings are often reported, with women, children, persons with disabilities and LGBTIQ+ people being the most vulnerable to violence. Around 300 refugees and asylum seekers registered in Kakuma refugee camp have an LGBTIQ+ profile. Over the past few months over 30 LGBTIQ+ people have been relocated from the Kakuma 3 part of the camp to other parts based on the safety concerns they raised and following careful assessment by the UNHCR on the ground.

In 2021, the EU allocated EUR 15 million in funding for humanitarian projects in Kenya, aiming first at assisting refugees and, since 2016, EUR 45 million for refugees and host communities in Kenya under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.

Parliament expressed its deep concern about the humanitarian situation and the reports of protracted violence within the Kakuma camp. It condemned the recent deadly arson attack directed at two LGBTIQ+ refugees.

The Kenyan authorities are urged to:

- continue investigating and to bring full clarity regarding this crime and to hold those responsible to account in accordance with Kenyan law and with respect to international human rights law;

- maintain Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps, at least until the situation in the region stabilises.

More integrated approach

The resolution called on the Kenyan Government, the UNHCR and the international community to commit to working together and finding alternative, durable, appropriate and rights-based solutions that are in line with the responsibility-sharing principles and goals of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). For this to be effective, it should include the resettlement to the EU of a meaningful number of refugees in need of international protection.

A more integrated and comprehensive regional approach to management of refugees is needed and for the strengthening of cooperation between Kenya and its neighbouring countries on political, security, humanitarian and development issues in order to address the root causes of forced displacement.

Expressing grave concern at the situation in the Horn of Africa, particularly regarding poverty and food insecurity, Parliament called on the Commission to release the emergency humanitarian aid needed to cope with the refugee problem and the famine in the region. This aid should be used, as a matter of priority, to address violence, including sexual violence, and the problems linked to severe inequalities, poverty, chronic malnutrition, access to health and public services, particularly reproductive healthcare, and the achievement of sustainable development goals.

The international community is called on to guarantee that refugees are covered by the COVID-19 vaccination programmes.

The EU is urged to:

- address the issue of food insecurity and lack of basic needs in the Kakuma camp;

- step up its efforts as a mediating partner and in support of sustainable and long-term socio-economic development in the region, thus creating an enabling and safe environment for voluntary returns and the reintegration of refugees;

- enhance the defence and promotion of human rights in Kenya;

- keep up its efforts to convince both the Kenyan Government and the African Union to reconsider their approach on LGBTIQ+, noting that their stance may in one way or another be placing LGBTIQ+ persons at risk of inhuman and degrading treatment that runs counter to the values of equality and equal protection enshrined in law.

Financing

Parliament stressed the importance of allocating a substantial share of Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – Global Europe to civil society organisations in third countries, including Kenya, for providing assistance and for the protection and monitoring of the rights of migrants. The EU should ensure that a significant part of the programming through this instrument is earmarked for the improvement of human rights and international protection for refugees, notably in Kenya.

Lastly, the resolution called on the Commission to regularly report to Parliament on the implementation and programming for the EU Trust Fund for Africa.