Resolution on the human rights violations by private military and security companies, particularly the Wagner Group

2021/2982(RSP) - 25/11/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 585 votes to 40, with 43 abstentions, a resolution on human rights violations by private military and security companies, particularly the Wagner Group.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled as a joint resolution by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA and ECR groups.

Parliament condemned in the strongest possible terms the **heinous crimes committed by the Wagner Group and related private military entities** (PMSEs). The Wagner Group was first identified in 2014, when it was supporting pro-Russian separatists and assisting the Russian army in the hostilities in the Donbass region of Ukraine and the illegal invasion and annexation of the Ukrainian region of Crimea. It has since been involved in conflicts in Syria, Sudan, Mozambique, Libya, the Central African Republic and Venezuela. In addition, an agreement between the Wagner group and the Malian authorities is reported to involve the transfer of 1 000 contractors to the country.

The resolution highlights strong indications that the **Russian state is responsible** for the financing, training, management and operational command of these paramilitary groups. The activities of the Wagner group are consistent with the extension of Russia's influence in conflict zones and Members are convinced that the Wagner group should be considered as acting on behalf of the Russian state.

Parliament called on all states using the services of the Wagner Group and its affiliates, in particular the Central African Republic, to **cut all ties with the Wagner Group** and its employees. It urged Mali's transitional authority to abandon plans to use private military companies.

Members considered that EU missions and operations cannot guarantee peace, security and stability in partner countries when private security companies accused of gross human rights violations are operating simultaneously in the same country. They called on the EU and its Member States to alert the countries concerned to the risks they face if they associate or collaborate with the Wagner Group and related entities.

Parliament urged the Commission to ensure that countries receiving EU funds cannot use them to finance private military companies with such terrible human rights records. It welcomed VP/HR Josep Borell's statement that the Foreign Affairs Council would shortly adopt targeted EU sanctions against individuals and entities associated with or collaborating with the Wagner Group. These sanctions should include a ban on entering EU territory and the freezing of the assets of Wagner Group agents.

Members called for all foreign fighters, including mercenaries, to leave Libyan territory. They urged Russia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and all other states to immediately stop sending mercenaries to Libya and to evacuate those currently there. It called on the Russian authorities to withdraw all mercenaries in eastern Ukraine and Crimea.

The EU and its Member States are called upon to ensure that a **clear and binding regulatory framework for PMSCs** is put in place, in particular in the framework of the UN Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group, especially with regard to major projects located in third countries and financed by investors or financial institutions established in the EU.

Members urged the EU and its Member States to take decisive action to **increase the accountability** of PMSCs, including the monitoring and follow-up of their transparency. They called on Russia to cooperate fully with the UN, the EU and the countries where the Wagner group is alleged to have committed crimes.