Resolution on the human rights situation in Cameroon

2021/2983(RSP) - 25/11/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 614 votes to 32, with 40 abstentions, a resolution on the situation in Cameroon.

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

Cameroon faces a number of simultaneous political and security challenges, including threats from Boko Haram in its Far North region and an internal armed separatist rebellion which has been ongoing for almost 5 years in its Anglophone North West and South West regions.

Since 2017, the armed conflict between the militias and state authorities has resulted in thousands of deaths and a massive humanitarian crisis in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon.

Deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Cameroon, including the right of citizens to freedom of expression, assembly and association, Parliament condemned the **violations of human rights, international law and international humanitarian law** perpetrated by the parties to the armed conflict and stressed the importance of fighting impunity.

Members urged the Cameroonian government and the political and military leaders of the separatist groups to **conclude a humanitarian ceasefire**. They encouraged the parties to the conflict to agree on confidence-building measures such as the release of non-violent political prisoners and the lifting of school boycotts. They called on the government of President Biya and the Anglophone separatists to immediately **re-initiate peace talks** and on the international community, in particular the African Union, Central African States and the European Union, to play a mediation role.

The Cameroonian authorities are urged to:

- stop bringing people to trial before a military court in trials with a predetermined outcome, which is often a death sentence, which is illegal under international human rights law;

- ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming at the abolition of the death penalty;

- protect all women in the country, especially in conflict areas, and promote gender equality and women's empowerment by strengthening the participation of women and women's rights organisations in public and political life;

- immediately and unconditionally release political opponents, demonstrators and all citizens who have been arbitrarily arrested and detained for purely political reasons.

Parliament condemned the blocking of humanitarian aid and the attacks, kidnappings, harassment and killings of humanitarian workers in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon, and also condemned the intimidation of independent observers and human rights defenders. It called on both parties to the conflict to stop deliberately targeting civilians and urged the separatists to immediately stop attacks on schools.

Lastly, Parliament called on the international community to **support efforts to combat the armed Islamist group Boko Haram**, stressing that terrorism can only be effectively combated by addressing the specific causes and problems of inequality.