The situation in Iraq ten years after the Gulf War

2000/2329(INI) - 23/04/2002

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Emma NICHOLSON (ELDR, UK) on the situation in Iraq eleven years after the Gulf War. It declared its support for the resolution adopted by the UN Commission for Human Rights on 16 April 2002, which said that the situation in Iraq had scarcely improved. MEPs strongly condemned the serious, repeated violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by the Iraqi Government, the widespread use of the death penalty, summary and arbitrary executions, torture and rape, the disappearances and the forced relocations of the population. They also called on the Iraqi Government to cease immediately its encouragement for the murderous policy of suicide bombings by Palestinians in the Middle East. The committee also said it was urgent, on humanitarian grounds, to lift general economic and trade sanctions while keeping the arms embargo in place. It reemphasised the importance of a multilateral political solution in the region under UN auspices, while at the same time rejecting any military action not covered by UN resolutions. The UN was urged to allocate part of the funds of the 'oil for food' programme, which was felt to have had little impact, to provide humanitarian aid for the 3.5 million Iraqi refugees, displaced persons and victims of terrorist, biological and chemical attacks. In view of the appalling situation in Iraq, MEPs reaffirmed the need to take swift action by deploying special human rights observers throughout the country and they also called for the creation of an international commission to investigate disappearances. The Council and Commission were urged to set up an 'office of inquiry' on human rights and put in place an active strategy which would include increased monitoring and public condemnation of human rights violations, a refusal to allow leading members of the Iraqi régime into EU states and a freeze on their illegal financial assets. The report stressed the need to bring those guilty of human rights abuses in Iraq before an ad hoc international tribunal for Iraq and, if possible, the International Criminal Court. It also demanded support for the democratic experience of the Kurdish administration in northern Iraq and for projects for the development of civil society. Concerned at the Iraqi authorities' failure to protect the environment, the committee called for measures to rehabilitate the worst affected areas, including the badly damaged South Iraqi marshlands. Lastly MEPs called on the Council to adopt a common position on the situation in Iraq, as a first step towards the adoption of a joint strategy towards the whole region.