Resolution on Afghanistan, one year after the Bonn Agreement

2003/2502(RSP) - 15/01/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on Afghanistan one year after the Bonn Agreement, and stressed that the international community should continue to lend the requisite support to the re-establishment of the political, judicial and security institutions needed to restore the authority of the government and the rule of law. Whilst there have been improvements in security in major parts of the country, and an Afghan National Army and Police Force are being formed, security concerns remain particularly in those parts which are still in the hands of warlords and where the Afghan Transitional Administration (ATA) has no full access. Parliament called for an enlarged mandate for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to give greater support to the ATA in its efforts to maintain control over the whole of the Afghan territory, to prevent the outbreak of regional confrontations as well as geopolitical instability. Member States are asked actively to contribute to the training of an Afghan National Army and police force and to the rebuilding of the judicial system and of a legal framework for effective human rights protection. The Commission should extend its cooperation to the Afghan Human Rights Commission (AHRC). Parliament welcomed the budgetary efforts undertaken by the Commission and the Member States but deplored the fact that no major European political role corresponds to this financial support. It went on to point out that the situation of women and girls gives cause for concern in large parts of Afghanistan and particularly in Heart. Under the rule of the local governor, women's and girls' freedom of expression, and association and respect for their right to equality, work, education and physical integrity steadily deteriorated throughout 2002. Parliament called on UNAMA and the AHRC to investigate human rights conditions in Herat and throughout Afghanistan pertaining to women's rights and called on ISAF forces to assist the AHRC in its work. The UN Commission on Human Rights special rapporteur on violence against women and the special rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan must visit areas of Afghanistan where women and girls are being subjected to human rights abuses. Turning to the question of repatriation, Parliament asked the United Nations and the donor governments to find just and coherent criteria for repatriation schemes for Afghan refugees who are facing an uncertain future and have to deal with different policies operated by hosting countries and humanitarian agencies. The Council should also reconsider the repatriation of Afghan refugees and to take into account the lack of any infrastructure on the Afghan side. The Commission and the wider donor community must continue to cooperate with the Afghan Government in promoting rapid progress in health and education and in assistance in all fields, and to ensure that assistance does not benefit regional leaders rather than the population in need. On the matter of the 600 people held in US military custody in Guantanamo Bay without charge or trial or access to lawyers, Parliament reiterated its call on the US to clarify their situation and take the necessary steps to ensure that basic safeguards are in place. It recognised the US Government's obligations to take effective security measures when dealing withcases affecting the safety of the public, but felt that the Government also has the obligation to ensure that any such measures do not compromise fundamental human rights safeguards under international law and standards. Finally, Parliament condemned the fact that there is currently no real cohesion between the activities of international organisations, governments, NGOs and the Afghan Government, and called for consideration to be given to the creation of a fully-fledged reconstruction agency.