Resolution on the Darfur region in the Sudan

2004/2576(RSP) - 16/09/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted by 566 votes to 6 with 16 abstentions a resolution tabled by the Committee on Development on the humanitarian situation in Sudan.

It condemns the Government of the Sudan for its deliberate support in Darfur of the targeting of civilians from certain communities - in villages and also later in centres for displaced persons - which includes killings, the use of sexual violence against women, looting and general harassment. It considers that the governance of the Sudan has, for decades, been characterised by persistent mismanagement, by underdevelopment and by the economic and political marginalisation of certain communities and regions and that this situation is at the root of the conflict in Darfur, as is the undemocratic nature of the present regime. Members call for a political solution rather that a military one as the only way to put an end to the conflict. Therefore, the Government of the Sudan, the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) are urged to engage more actively in the Abuja (Nigeria) peace process under the auspices of the African Union, and to respect strictly the Ceasefire Agreement signed in Chad on 8 April 2004. Parliament congratulates the Commission and Council on having been in the forefront of international action in facing up to the crisis in Darfur, especially in brokering the Ceasefire Agreement, participating in the AU-led ceasefire monitoring mission, providing humanitarian aid and developing a political process to resolve the conflict.

With regard to EU action, Parliament stresses the need for the rapid disbursement of the EU funding for the humanitarian assistance operation and for the African Union. It calls on the Council and Commission to reinforce the military and civilian staff of the African Union in Addis Ababa – including the recruitment and training of planning officers and the improvement of the chain of command – and its liaison office in Khartoum. The resolution asks EU Member States to coordinate their offers of support to the African Union rather than acting bilaterally in order to lessen the bureaucratic burden on the African Union at a time of such heavy pressure.

Parliament asks the Government of Sudan to do the following:

- to finalise the Naivasha (Kenya) peace process between the Government of the Sudan and the SPLM /A on the basis of the substantial progress already made;
- to ground all military aircraft in Darfur immediately;
- release all prisoners of conscience, including those opposition members and human rights activists who were identified in a letter the European Parliament delegation handed to the Minister of the Interior;
- agree to increase the number of human rights monitors from UNHCHR;
- agree to the establishment of an international human rights commission which can independently assess the crimes committed in the Darfur region since April 2003;
- further speed up its issuing of visas for humanitarian aid workers travelling to Khartoum and beyond.

It urges the Sudanese authorities to end impunity and to bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against humanity and war crimes, which can be construed as tantamount to genocide. Should the Sudan fail to exercise its sovereign jurisdiction, the international community will have to find a way of ensuring they are brought to justice, including those responsible in the present Sudanese regime. Parliament calls on the Council and the Member States to request the United Nations Security Council to exercise its referral powers pursuant to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Parliament asks the United Nations:

- to coordinate plans better with the AU in order to avoid a situation where the establishment of so called "safe areas" under the UN action plan could allow movements of Government troops, thus jeopardising the Ceasefire Agreement. Parliament believes that any movement of troops is, in any case, to be considered as a breach of the Ceasefire Agreement;
- ensure that, when any future plans for Darfur are drawn up, all parties to the conflict are consulted, including the SLA/M and JEM, and also to ensure consultation with the Ceasefire Commission;
- consider a global arms embargo on the Sudan and other targeted sanctions against those responsible for massive abuses of human rights and to ensure that any such sanctions do not add to the suffering of the population of Sudan.

The Parliament also:

- stresses the need for the rapid disbursement of the EU funding for the humanitarian assistance operation and for the African Union;
- calls for a substantial increase in the number of ceasefire observers as a first step towards enhancing the monitoring capacity of the AU Ceasefire Commission;
- calls for consideration to be given to the establishment of an international police force to increase protection and security for civilians at risk and with a view to advising and supporting the Sudanese police and to restoring civilians' confidence and sense of security;
- calls on all parties involved in the conflict to refrain from the recruitment and use of child soldiers under the age of 18.

Lastly, Parliament urges the Government of Eritrea to refrain from providing any direct or indirect support to those involved in the conflict in Darfur.