Resolution on Zimbabwe

2004/2622(RSP) - 16/12/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted by 76 votes to 0, with 1 abstention, a resolution on Zimbabwe.

The text adopted in plenary had been tabled as a joint resolution by the EPP-ED, PES, ALDE, Greens /EFA, GUE/NGL, IND/DEM and UEN groups.

The resolution recalls that 75% of the Zimbabwean population, some 9 million people, are now living below the poverty line, and the World Food Programme has only been able to provide food aid for 1.6 million people in December 2004, owing to interference from the Mugabe regime. The Mugabe regime is intensifying its political oppression under the Public Order and Security Act and other such measures, as well as through additional repressive legislation, for example the Non-Governmental Organisations Act, which infringes fundamental human rights such as freedom of association.

A case of particular and urgent concern is that of opposition MP Roy Bennett, who, in the five years since his election, has been the subject of a vicious campaign of persecution by the Mugabe regime.

The Parliament insists that all political interference in the distribution of international food aid be halted without delay, to prevent the Zanu-PF government from using food as a political weapon. It also insists that repressive legislation such as the Public Order and Security Act be repealed and that the forthcoming elections in Zimbabwe be held in accordance with the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) principles and guidelines governing democratic elections.

MEPs once again call on the Council and the Commission to:

- close loopholes in the EU's targeted sanctions against the Mugabe regime, and to ensure that the sanctions are rigorously enforced;
- provide maximum support for international efforts to ensure free and fair elections in Zimbabwe, and in particular technical support to local, regional and international observer missions.

The resolution calls on Zimbabwe's neighbours, and in particular President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, to undertake on behalf of the people of Zimbabwe to bring about change for the better and ensure that the Zimbabwean Government fully cooperates with the SADC and the wider international community to guarantee free and fair elections and a robust and timely international monitoring presence.

The African Union is called upon to continue to monitor, and also act in regard to, the human rights, civil rights and political situation in Zimbabwe and to keep up this process of peer review throughout Africa.

Lastly, the Parliament demands the immediate release of Roy Bennett MP and the cessation of all violence and intimidation towards his family and employees.