Resolution on Zimbabwe

2007/2545(RSP) - 26/04/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a joint resolution on Zimbabwe by 68 votes to 1 with 0 abstentions and called on Member States to apply the EU's existing restrictions on Zimbabwe strictly, including the arms embargo and the travel ban. It also urged that all aid to Zimbabwe be delivered exclusively through NGOs, the EU being the most important donor to the country.

In the wake of the violent break-up of the Save Zimbabwe Campaign prayer rally organised on 11 March 2007 by opponents of the regime - two people were killed and more than 300 were arrested - MEPs strongly condemned the Mugabe dictatorship for its relentless oppression of the Zimbabwean people, opposition parties and civil society groups and its destruction of the Zimbabwean economy, which has deepened the misery of millions of Zimbabweans. It called again on Robert Mugabe to abide by his own promise to stand down, sooner rather than later, which would be the largest single step possible towards reviving Zimbabwean society, politics and the economy.

The House condemned the murder of opposition activist Gift Tandare and the arrest of Morgan Tsvangirai, chairman of the Movement for Democratic Change, Nelson Chamisa, Grace Kwinjeh, Lovemore Madhuku, William Bango, Sekai Holland, Tendai Biti, Arthur Mutambara and many others treated brutally by the police forces. It expressed deep consternation at the fact that Zimbabwe's Information Minister, Sikhanyiso Ndlovu, rejected the reports of police brutality and torture, instead accusing the opposition of attacking the police.

Parliament called on the Government of Zimbabwe to restore the rule of law and to halt violent attacks on opposition and civil society groups and individuals, to end "disappearances" and arbitrary detentions, to end torture and the abuse of detainees, to respect the courts and members of the legal profession, and to respect and uphold the rights to freedom of expression and assembly. The Zimbabwean Government must begin an immediate process to end the country's crisis by agreeing to a credible road map for a democratic transition, the immediate restoration of the rule of law, a framework for free and fair elections under international supervision, and transitional guarantees of non-partisan control of key state institutions such as the army and the police.

Parliament welcomed the recognition by SADC that a crisis exists in Zimbabwe and the appointment of President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa to facilitate dialogue between Zanu-PF and the opposition MDC. It emphasised that there are no economic sanctions against Zimbabwe, only restrictive measures targeted at the Mugabe regime. It trusted that the mediation of South African President Mbeki will bring an end to the current cycle of violence and intimidation, without which his mandate to facilitate dialogue between the opposition and the Government in Zimbabwe and a wide national dialogue beyond Zanu-PF and the MDC, including Church leaders, business, trade unions and other civil society players, cannot be adequately fulfilled.

The Council must ensure that all Member States rigorously apply existing restrictive measures, including the arms embargo and the travel ban, and it should further expand the scope of the targeted restrictive measures and enlarge the list of banned individuals so that it encompasses even more of Mugabe's power structure, including government ministers, deputies and governors, military personnel, the Central Intelligence Organisation and police personnel, and the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe.

The EU is the most important donor to Zimbabwe, with total funding of EUR 193 million in 2006, of which EUR 94.7 million alone go to food and humanitarian and emergency aid. Parliament deeply regretted that the Mugabe regime manipulates such support, particularly food aid, using it as a political

weapon with which to punish those who dare voice opposition to the regime. It called on the United Kingdom, which assumed the Presidency of the United Nations Security Council in April 2007, to put Zimbabwe on the agenda of the Security Council, and expected that South Africa will play a constructive role as a non-permanent member of the Security Council.

The Mugabe regime should derive absolutely no financial benefit or propaganda value from either the run-up to the 2010 World Cup or the tournament itself. Parliament called on South Africa and on FIFA to exclude Zimbabwe from participating in pre-World Cup matches, holding international friendly games or hosting national teams involved in the event. Lastly, the House backed the initiative of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly to send a delegation to Zimbabwe to ascertain the situation on the ground. This investigation should be carried out as soon as possible. MEPs insist that the government of Zimbabwe grant access to the country to all members of any such delegation.