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B7-0155/2014

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Syria
(2014/2531(RSP))

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on behalf of the PPE Group

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**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Syria
(2014/2531(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria,
- having regard to the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on Syria, in particular those of 20 January 2014; having regard to the European Council conclusions on Syria,
- having regard to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR), Catherine Ashton, on Syria, and in particular her remarks at the Geneva II Conference on Syria of 22 January 2014,
- having regards to the statements by the Commissioner responsible for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Kristalina Georgieva, on Syria,
- having regard to UN Security Council resolution 2118 of 27 September 2013 on the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons; having regard to the final report of the United Nations Mission to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, published on 12 December 2013,
- having regard to the resolution of the United Nations Human Rights Council of 27 September 2013 on the continuing and grave deterioration of human rights and the humanitarian situation in Syria,
- having regard to the report of the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic of 11 September 2013,
- having regard to the opening and concluding remarks by the UN Secretary-General at the Geneva II Conference on Syria of 22 January 2014,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol thereto on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, to all of which Syria is a party,
- having regard to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the additional protocols thereto, the Geneva Protocol (to the Hague Convention) for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed in Geneva on 17 June 1925, and the standards set forth in the Chemical Weapons Convention,

- having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Geneva II Conference on Syria was opened by the UN Secretary-General on 22 January 2014, its aim being to achieve a political solution to the conflict through a comprehensive agreement between the Syrian Government and opposition for the full implementation of the Geneva Communiqué;
- B. whereas, according to the UN, since the start of the violent crackdown on peaceful protesters in Syria in March 2011 more than 100 000 people, most of them civilians, have been killed; whereas according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), more than 6.5 million people are internally displaced and there are more than 2.3 million Syrian refugees, mainly in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq;
- C. whereas human rights are being violated on a large scale by the Syrian regime, with violations including massacres and other unlawful killings, arbitrary arrests and unlawful detentions, hostage-taking, enforced disappearances, executions of prisoners, systematic torture and ill-treatment, sexual violence and violations of children's rights;
- D. whereas the Syrian regime has demolished entire neighbourhoods, as a punishment policy towards civilians; whereas the large-scale destruction of urban areas has led to desperation and significant expulsions of civilians;
- E. whereas summary extrajudicial executions and other forms of human rights violations are being committed by forces opposing the regime; whereas up to 1 200 different factions are fighting against the regime;
- F. whereas effective humanitarian aid in Syria is not possible due to the security situation, hindered access and infrastructural constraints;
- G. whereas at the Second International Pledging Conference for Syria, which took place in Kuwait on 15 January 2014, USD 2.4 billion were pledged by donors, including EUR 550 million pledged by the EU and its Member States;
- H. whereas on 12 December 2013 the Mission to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic concluded that chemical weapons had been used against soldiers and / or civilians, including children, in 2013; whereas 27 September 2013 saw the unanimous adoption of UNSC resolution 2118, which inter alia endorsed the expeditious destruction of Syria's chemical weapons programme, to be completed by 30 June 2014;
- 1. Fully supports the Geneva II Conference on Syria, which should be the first step in a process that will lead to a political solution to the conflict; is convinced that a lasting solution to the current crisis in Syria can only be achieved through a Syrian-led, inclusive political process with the backing of the international community; underlines the need for a genuine political transition in the country, thereby addressing the people's aspiration for freedom and democracy; calls on all parties to engage constructively in a genuine negotiation; welcomes the meetings between representatives of the Syrian Government and opposition groups in the presence of UN-Arab League Joint Special

Representative Lakhdar Brahimi, at which among other topics the situation in the besieged city of Homs was discussed; welcomes the fact that the sides have reached a provisional agreement that would see humanitarian aid enter Homs and would allow women and children to leave its war-ravaged areas; expresses disappointment that in practice there has been no movement on allowing UN aid convoys into Homs, or on allowing civilians to leave the besieged city; stresses that following the outcome of negotiations regarding the Yarmouk refugee camp in Damascus, some aid has been delivered to its residents; notes that no serious breakthrough and no major change in the position of either side could be witnessed during the first talks; takes positive note of the fact that a second round of talks is planned for 10 February 2014; welcomes the statement by Lakhdar Brahimi in which he expressed the hope that ‘we will try to draw some lessons about what we did and see if we can organise ourselves better for the next session’;

2. Welcomes the importance the EU attaches to work throughout the Geneva process on promoting confidence-building measures that would directly benefit the local population and increase the chances of the conference’s success; notes that confidence-building measures could for example be agreements on local ceasefires, lifting of sieges in certain urban areas so to allow improved humanitarian access, and the release of arbitrarily detained prisoners or the exchange of detainees;
3. Condemns in the strongest possible terms all acts of violence, systematic torture, execution of prisoners and widespread violations of human rights and international humanitarian law perpetrated by the Syrian regime; condemns all forms of human rights violations committed by armed opposition groups;
4. Is deeply concerned at the continuing and indiscriminate bloodshed among the civilian population; expresses its concern over further militarisation of the conflict and sectarian violence;
5. Calls for the cessation of all violence in Syria; underlines the fact that this call has also been made at the Geneva II Conference; stresses that those responsible for the widespread, systemic and gross human rights violations committed in Syria must be held accountable and brought to justice; supports the call of the EU on all foreign fighters in Syria, including Hezbollah, to withdraw immediately; expresses its concern at the spread of extremism and extremist groups in Syria; is concerned at the plight of all vulnerable groups and of ethnic and religious minorities, including Christians; stresses that all actors have a duty to protect all the different minorities present in Syria;
6. Extends its condolences to the victims’ families; applauds the courage of the Syrian people and reiterates its solidarity with its struggle for freedom, dignity and democracy;
7. Calls on all parties involved in the conflict to facilitate the provision of humanitarian aid and assistance through all possible channels, including across borders and conflict lines, and to ensure the safety of all medical personnel and humanitarian workers;
8. Welcomes the start of the transfer of chemicals from Syria for destruction outside the country; stresses that this step must be followed by swift and decisive action by the Government of Syria to meet all its obligations and commitments within the agreed

timelines of UNSC Resolution 2118 and the OPCW Executive Council decisions;

9. Reiterates its call for the EU to support the establishment of safe havens along the Turkish-Syrian border, and possibly within Syria, as well as for the creation of humanitarian corridors by the international community;
10. Calls in particular on Russia and China, as permanent members of the UN Security Council, to fulfil their responsibility and to facilitate the adoption of a humanitarian resolution; reiterates its call on the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court for a formal investigation;
11. Pays tribute to host communities and to Syria's neighbours, in particular Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq, for their resourcefulness in providing shelter and humanitarian aid for Syrian people fleeing the armed conflict in their country; reiterates its concern at the spillover effects of the Syrian conflict in neighbouring countries in terms of humanitarian crisis, stability and security; recalls that a cohesive response is needed to support host countries, including humanitarian, development, and macroeconomic assistance;
12. Welcomes the USD 2.4 billion pledged in Kuwait and calls on the donors to swiftly fulfil the pledges made at the conference; welcomes the commitments by the EU and its Member States as the biggest donors of financial aid;
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Secretary-General, and all the parties involved in the conflict in Syria.