



TEXTS ADOPTED

P8_TA(2018)0313

The migration crisis and humanitarian situation in Venezuela and its borders

European Parliament resolution of 5 July 2018 on the migration crisis and humanitarian situation in Venezuela and at its terrestrial borders with Colombia and Brazil (2018/2770(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Venezuela, in particular those of 27 February 2014 on the situation in Venezuela¹, of 18 December 2014 on the persecution of the democratic opposition in Venezuela², of 12 March 2015 on the situation in Venezuela³, of 8 June 2016 on the situation in Venezuela⁴, of 27 April 2017 on the situation in Venezuela⁵, of 8 February 2018 on the situation in Venezuela⁶, and of 3 May 2018 on the elections in Venezuela⁷,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,
- having regard to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,
- having regard to the statement of 8 February 2018 by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Ms Fatou Bensouda,
- having regard to the statement of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on Venezuela of 31 March 2017,
- having regard to the report by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human

¹ OJ C 285, 29.8.2017, p. 145.

² OJ C 294, 12.8.2016, p. 21.

³ OJ C 316, 30.8.2016, p. 190.

⁴ OJ C 86, 6.3.2018, p. 101.

⁵ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0200.

⁶ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0041.

⁷ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0199.

Rights (OHCHR) entitled ‘Human rights violations in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela’ of 22 June 2018,

- having regard to the joint statement of 28 April 2017 by the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, and the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention,
 - having regard to the G7 Leaders’ statement of 23 May 2018,
 - having regard to the declarations of the Lima Group of 23 January 2018, 14 February 2018, 21 May 2018, 2 June 2018 and 15 June 2018,
 - having regard to the declaration of 20 April 2018 by the Organisation of American States (OAS) on the worsening humanitarian situation in Venezuela,
 - having regard to the report of the General Secretariat of the OAS and the panel of independent international experts on the possible commission of crimes against humanity in Venezuela of 29 May 2018,
 - having regard to the report published by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) on 12 February 2018 entitled ‘Democratic Institutions, the Rule of Law and Human Rights in Venezuela’, and to the IACHR resolution of 14 March 2018,
 - having regard to the declarations of 26 January 2018, 19 April 2018 and 22 May 2018 by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) on the latest developments in Venezuela,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions of 13 November 2017, 22 January 2018, 28 May 2018 and 25 June 2018,
 - having regard to the statement of the Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides, on the official mission to Colombia in March 2018,
 - having regard to the statement of 23 April 2018 by its Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the situation of human rights, democracy and rule of law in Venezuela continues to deteriorate; whereas Venezuela is facing an unprecedented political, social, economic and humanitarian crisis, characterised by insecurity, violence, human rights violations, deterioration of the rule of law, lack of medicine and social services, loss of income and increasing poverty rates, which is resulting in a mounting death toll and increasing numbers of refugees and migrants;
- B. whereas a growing number of people in Venezuela, in particular vulnerable groups such as women, children and sick people, are suffering from malnutrition as a consequence of limited access to quality health services, medicines, food and water; whereas 87 % of the population of Venezuela is affected by poverty, with the extreme poverty level standing at 61,2 %; whereas maternal mortality has increased by 60 % and infant mortality by 30 %; whereas in 2017, cases of malaria increased by 69 % compared with

the previous year, this being the largest increase worldwide, and whereas other diseases such as tuberculosis and measles are on the point of becoming epidemics;

- C. whereas, regrettably, despite the readiness of the international community, the Venezuelan Government remains obstinate in its denial of the problem and its refusal to openly receive and facilitate the distribution of international humanitarian aid;
- D. whereas the economic situation has significantly worsened; whereas the International Monetary Fund has projected that hyperinflation in Venezuela will soar to 13 000 % in 2018, up from an estimated 2 400 % in 2017, resulting in price increases of, on average, almost 1,5 % every hour;
- E. whereas an OHCHR report published on 22 June 2018 highlights the Venezuelan authorities' failure to hold to account the perpetrators of serious human rights violations, which include killings, the use of excessive force against demonstrators, arbitrary detentions, ill-treatment and torture; whereas impunity in favour of security officers suspected of the extrajudicial killings of demonstrators also appears to be rife;
- F. whereas according to the report presented on 29 May 2018 by the Panel of Independent International Experts designated by the OAS, seven crimes against humanity have been committed in Venezuela, dating back at least as far as February 2014, and the government itself has been responsible for the current humanitarian crisis in the region; whereas the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) announced the launch of a preliminary investigation into alleged crimes committed in Venezuela since April 2017;
- G. whereas the elections held on 20 May 2018 were conducted without complying with the minimum international standards for a credible process and failed to respect political pluralism, democracy, transparency and the rule of law; whereas this places additional constraints on efforts to resolve the political crisis; whereas the EU, together with other democratic bodies, does not recognise the elections or the authorities put in place by this illegitimate process;
- H. whereas the current multidimensional crisis in Venezuela is generating the largest population displacement in the region; whereas according to the UNHCR and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the total number of Venezuelans to have left the country has increased dramatically, from 437 000 in 2005 to over 1,6 million in 2017; whereas around 945 000 Venezuelans left the country between 2015 and 2017; whereas in 2018 the total number of people who have left the country since 2014 has exceeded 2 million; whereas there has been a 2 000 % increase in the number of Venezuelan nationals seeking asylum worldwide since 2014, reaching more than 280 000 by mid-June 2018;
- I. whereas 520 000 Venezuelans in the region have accessed alternative legal forms of stay; whereas more than 280 000 Venezuelans have claimed refugee status worldwide; whereas the number of Venezuelan applicants for international protection in the EU increased by over 3 500 % between 2014 and 2017; whereas it is estimated that more than 60 % of Venezuelans remain in an irregular situation;
- J. whereas according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), Colombia is hosting the biggest share of displaced people, with over

820 000 Venezuelans living on its territory; whereas Cúcuta and Boa Vista, which are situated on the border with Venezuela, are experiencing a major influx of people, who are often in terrible health and nutrition conditions; whereas Peru, Chile, Argentina, Panama, Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Uruguay, Bolivia and Paraguay are also facing influxes of great numbers of refugees and migrants; whereas maritime routes are becoming increasingly significant, particularly to Caribbean islands such as Aruba, Curaçao, Bonaire, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana; whereas European countries, in particular Spain, Portugal and Italy, are also being increasingly affected; whereas host countries are coming under increasing strain in terms of providing assistance to new arrivals;

- K. whereas Colombian national and local authorities are working commendably to grant the enjoyment of basic human rights, such as to primary education and basic health services, to those fleeing Venezuela, regardless of their status; whereas in Colombia, local communities, religious institutions and ordinary people alike are welcoming Venezuelan migrants in the spirit of fraternity, and are demonstrating great resilience and solidarity;
- L. whereas on 7 June 2018 the Commission announced a package of EUR 35,1 million in emergency aid and development assistance to support the Venezuelan people and the neighbourhood countries affected by the crisis; whereas this financial contribution will be added to the EUR 37 million that the EU has already committed to humanitarian aid and cooperation projects in the country; whereas as of 13 June 2018 there is a 56 % funding gap in the UNHCR supplementary appeal for USD 46,1 million;
- M. whereas every month more than 12 000 Venezuelans enter the Brazilian state of Roraima, around 2 700 of whom stay in the city of Boa Vista; whereas Venezuelans already represent more than 7 % of the population of this city, and at the current rate there will be more than 60 000 Venezuelans living there by the end of the year; whereas this demographic influx is putting enormous pressure on the city's public services, in particular public health and education; whereas Roraima is one of the poorest states of Brazil, with a very narrow labour market and a shallow economy, which is another obstacle to the integration of refugees and migrants;
- N. whereas Parliament sent an ad hoc delegation to the Venezuelan borders with Colombia and Brazil from 25 to 30 June 2018 to assess the impact of the crisis on the ground;
1. Is deeply shocked and alarmed by the devastating humanitarian situation in Venezuela, which has resulted in many deaths and an unprecedented influx of refugees and migrants to neighbouring countries and beyond; expresses its solidarity with all Venezuelans forced to flee their country because of the lack of very basic living conditions, such as access to food, drinking water, health services and medicines;
 2. Urges the Venezuelan authorities to acknowledge the ongoing humanitarian crisis, prevent its further deterioration, and promote political and economic solutions to ensure the safety of all civilians and stability for the country and the region;
 3. Demands that the Venezuelan authorities allow unimpeded humanitarian aid into the country as a matter of urgency to prevent the aggravation of the humanitarian and public health crisis, and in particular the reappearance of diseases such as measles, malaria, diphtheria and foot-and-mouth disease, and that they grant unhindered access

to international organisations wishing to assist all affected sectors of society; calls for the rapid implementation of a short-term response to counter malnutrition among the most vulnerable groups, such as women, children and sick people; is extremely worried about the number of unaccompanied children crossing the borders;

4. Commends the Colombian Government for its prompt reaction and the support it has provided to all incoming Venezuelans; also praises Brazil and other countries in the region, in particular Peru, regional and international organisations, private and public entities, the Catholic Church and ordinary citizens in the region as a whole for their active help and solidarity vis-à-vis Venezuelan refugees and migrants; calls on the Member States to provide immediate protection-oriented responses to Venezuelan refugees or migrants on their territory, such as humanitarian visas, special stay arrangements or other regional migratory frameworks, with the relevant protection safeguards; calls on the Venezuelan authorities to facilitate and speed up the issuance and renewal of identification documents to their own nationals, whether in Venezuela or abroad;
5. Calls on the international community, including the EU, to establish a coordinated, comprehensive and regional response to the crisis and to step up their financial and material assistance to recipient countries by fulfilling their commitments; warmly welcomes the EU humanitarian aid allocated to date and calls, as a matter of urgency, for additional humanitarian support to be released via emergency funds, in order to meet the rapidly increasing needs of people affected by the Venezuelan crisis in the neighbouring countries;
6. Reiterates that the current humanitarian crisis stems from a political one; urges the Venezuelan authorities to ensure that all human rights violations, including violations against civilians, are immediately halted, and that all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, freedom of the press and freedom of assembly are fully respected; urges the Venezuelan authorities to respect all democratically elected institutions, notably the National Assembly, release all political prisoners and uphold democratic principles, the rule of law and human rights; calls on the European External Action Service to do its utmost to facilitate the international mediation efforts needed to open up spaces for a viable solution to the current humanitarian and political crisis;
7. Calls for the holding of fresh presidential elections in accordance with internationally recognised democratic standards and the Venezuelan constitutional order, within a transparent, equal, fair and international monitoring framework, with no limitations on political parties or candidates and with full respect for the political rights of all Venezuelans; stresses that the legitimate government resulting from such elections must urgently address the current economic and social crisis in Venezuela and work towards national reconciliation;
8. Recalls that any sanctions adopted by the international community should be targeted and reversible and do no harm whatsoever to the Venezuelan population; welcomes the swift adoption of additional targeted and revocable sanctions, as well as the arms embargo imposed in November 2017; reiterates that these sanctions have been imposed on high-ranking officials for grave human rights violations, for undermining democracy and the rule of law in Venezuela and for conducting the illegitimate elections of 20 May 2018, which were given no international recognition and which took place without an

agreement on the date or conditions, and in circumstances which did not allow the participation of all political parties on an equal footing; recalls the possibility of extending these sanctions to those responsible for the heightened political, social, economic and humanitarian crisis, in particular President Nicolás Maduro, in accordance with its previous resolutions;

9. Reiterates that those responsible for grave human rights violations must be held to account; fully supports the preliminary investigations of the ICC into the extensive crimes and acts of repression perpetrated by the Venezuelan regime, and calls for the EU to play an active role in this regard; fully supports the call of the Panel of Independent International Experts designated by the Secretary General of the OAS and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to establish a commission of inquiry into the situation in Venezuela and to deepen the involvement of the ICC;
10. 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 Government and National Assembly of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the governments and parliaments of the Republic of Colombia, the Republic of Brazil and the Republic of Peru, the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly, the Secretary-General of the Organisation of American States and the Lima Group.