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Situation in Nigeria**European Parliament resolution of 30 April 2015 on the situation in Nigeria (2015/2520(RSP))**

(2016/C 346/15)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Nigeria and in particular to its most recent plenary debate on the matter, of 14 January 2015,
- having regard to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, including those of 8 January, 19 January, 31 March, and 14 and 15 April 2015,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 9 February 2015,
- having regard to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 583/2014 of 28 May 2014⁽¹⁾, which added Boko Haram to the list of persons, groups and entities covered by the freezing of funds and economic resources,
- having regard to the fifth Nigeria-EU ministerial dialogue, held in Abuja on 27 November 2014,
- having regard to the preliminary conclusions of the EU and European Parliament election observation missions,
- having regard to the regional conference on security held in Niamey on 20 January 2015,
- having regard to the statements made by the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, on the continuing violence and deteriorating security situation in north-eastern Nigeria,
- having regard to the statements by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the possibility that members of Boko Haram could be accused of war crimes,
- having regard to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief of 1981,
- having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 1981, ratified by Nigeria on 22 June 1983,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, ratified by Nigeria on 29 October 1993,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, adopted on 29 May 1999, and in particular the provisions of Chapter IV thereof,
- having regard to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the optional protocol thereto,
- having regard to the Partnership Agreement between the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part (the Cotonou Agreement),

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 160, 29.5.2014, p. 27.

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- having regard to Article 208 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which establishes taking into account the principle of policy coherence for development in all EU external policies,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Nigeria is the most populous and ethnically diverse country in Africa, and is marked by regional and religious cleavages and a north-south divide characterised by severe economic and social disparities;
- B. whereas Nigeria is the biggest economy in the African continent and a major EU trading partner, but whereas despite its vast resources, Nigeria ranks among the most unequal countries in the world, with more than 70 % of its population living on less than USD 1,25 per day and 10 % of the country's population controlling over 90 % of its wealth and resources;
- C. whereas the attacks carried out by Boko Haram between 3 and 8 January 2015 targeted Baga and 16 surrounding towns and villages, destroying nearly 3 700 structures, according to satellite images, and killing thousands of people;
- D. whereas Boko Haram has taken and held a number of towns in north-east Nigeria and continues to forcibly recruit civilians to its ranks, including many children; whereas the violence caused by Boko Haram has resulted in more than 22 000 deaths since 2009, indiscriminately targeting Christians, Muslims and anyone who does not adhere to its dogmatic and extreme beliefs; whereas in March 2015 Boko Haram pledged its allegiance to the Islamic State group; whereas on 27 March 2015 hundreds of bodies were found in the north-eastern town of Damasak, apparently victims of the Boko Haram insurgency;
- E. whereas in April 2014 more than 270 girls were kidnapped from a government school in Chibok (Borno state); whereas the majority remain missing and are at serious risk of sexual violence, enslavement and forced marriage; whereas since then hundreds more people have been abducted by Boko Haram; whereas on 28 April 2015 almost 300 girls and women were rescued in Sambisa Forest;
- F. whereas the UN estimates that the violence in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states has displaced 1,5 million people, including 800 000 children, while more than 3 million people have been affected by the insurgency;
- G. whereas more than 300 000 Nigerians have fled to north-western Cameroon and south-western Niger to escape the violence, and whereas hundreds of Nigerians are risking their lives on the migration routes to the EU in hope of living in better economic, social and security conditions;
- H. whereas Boko Haram aims to establish a fully Islamic state in northern Nigeria, including the implementation of criminal sharia courts, and to forbid Western education;
- I. whereas owing to worsening insecurity, farmers are no longer able to cultivate their lands or harvest their products for fear of being attacked by Boko Haram, a situation that is further exacerbating food insecurity;
- J. whereas the number of attacks, including the use of children as suicide bombers, is increasing, and whereas attacks are being perpetrated across large areas and also in the neighbouring countries of Chad and Cameroon;
- K. whereas the initial response of the Nigerian authorities was extremely insufficient and has ignited a sentiment of distrust among the population towards the country's institutions; whereas under the former government the Nigerian authorities carried out mass incarcerations and detentions, together with extrajudicial killings and a large number of other violations of international law;
- L. whereas the spillover of the Boko Haram insurgency into neighbouring countries highlights the importance of greater regional cooperation and response;

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- M. whereas Nigeria plays a key role in regional and African politics and is a driving force of regional integration through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS);
- N. whereas oil revenues have been steadily decreasing and an economic crisis is looming, and whereas, by some estimates, between USD 3 billion and USD 8 billion in Nigerian oil is stolen annually; whereas decades of economic mismanagement, instability and corruption have hindered investment in Nigeria's education and social services systems;
- O. whereas education, literacy, women's rights, social justice and a fair distribution of state revenues in society through tax systems, reducing inequality, and the fight against corruption and tax evasion are key to fighting fundamentalism, violence and intolerance;
- P. whereas terrorism is a global threat, but whereas the global community's efforts to do more against Boko Haram in Nigeria depended to some degree on the full measure of credibility, accountability and transparency of the election;
- Q. whereas Nigeria is still a young and fragile democracy, which faced extreme violence following the results of the 2011 elections and accusations of vote rigging;
- R. whereas the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) postponed the elections from 14 and 28 February 2015 to 28 March and 11 April 2015, in order to enable the government to launch military actions against Boko Haram, and whereas a regional response was launched in March 2015;
- S. whereas the Chadian army, together with Niger and Cameroon, is the main force fighting against Boko Haram, and whereas its full involvement against Boko Haram terrorists in Gamboru Ngala, Malam Fatori and Kangalam in Nigeria is acknowledged; whereas the great price paid by this army in the war against terrorism is recognised; whereas the European Parliament expresses its full solidarity with the wounded and the families of the victims;
- T. whereas the electoral campaign took place in a tense environment, with incidents of election-related violence reported in all parts of the country, especially in the south and south-west, together with Boko Haram attacks to discourage voters, breaches of campaign regulations and inducement of voters;
- U. whereas systemic weaknesses, notably at the collation, together with the misuse of incumbency and the use of violence, were noted by local and international observers, including EU observers; whereas, however, no systematic manipulation was observed;
- V. whereas the EU deployed a long-term election observation mission at the invitation of the government, which included a delegation from the European Parliament; whereas such missions were also deployed by the African Union, the Commonwealth of Nations and ECOWAS;
- W. whereas on 31 March 2015 the presidential candidate of the opposition All Progressives Congress (APC), General Muhammadu Buhari, was declared the winner of the elections, and the incumbent president peacefully conceded his defeat; whereas the opposition APC won the majority of the presidential, Senate and House of Representatives votes in four of the six geopolitical zones;
- X. whereas fewer women were elected than in 2011, which already displayed a negative trend;
- Y. whereas 17 % of girls are married before they turn 15, with child marriage figures as high as 76 % in the North-West region; whereas Nigeria has the highest absolute number of female genital mutilation (FGM) victims worldwide, accounting for about a quarter of the estimated 115-130 million victims in the world;

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1. Strongly condemns the ongoing and increasingly disturbing violence, including the continuing wave of gun and bomb attacks, suicide bombings, sexual slavery and other sexual violence, kidnappings and other violent acts committed by the terrorist sect Boko Haram against civilian, government and military targets in Nigeria, which have led to thousands of deaths and injuries and have displaced hundreds of thousands of people, and which could constitute crimes against humanity;
2. Deplores the massacre of innocent men, women and children, and stands shoulder to shoulder with the people of Nigeria in their determination to fight all forms of terrorism in their country; praises the work of all journalists and human rights defenders in seeking to bring the world's attention to Boko Haram's extremism and to the innocent victims of its violence;
3. Recalls that one year has passed since the abduction of 276 girls from a school outside Chibok, and that according to human rights groups at least another 2 000 girls and women have been taken; asks the government and the international community to do everything in their power to find the abductees and free them;
4. Asks the newly elected president to keep his campaign promises and to put all resources into bringing an end to the violence of Boko Haram, re-establishing stability and security across the whole country and addressing the root causes of this terrorism, and in particular to take firmer action to fight internal corruption, mismanagement and inefficiencies within the public institutions and the army, which have rendered it incapable of dealing with the scourge of Boko Haram in the north of the country, and to adopt measures to starve Boko Haram of its sources of illegal income through cooperation with neighbouring countries, in particular with regard to smuggling and trafficking;
5. Asks Nigeria's religious authorities and leaders to cooperate actively with civil society and public authorities in order to combat extremism and radicalisation;
6. Calls on the new Nigerian authorities to adopt a roadmap for the social and economic development of the northern and southern states in order to address the issues of poverty, inequality, educational opportunities and access to healthcare, promoting fair distribution of oil revenues in the context of decentralisation, which are a cause of spiralling violence; also calls on the Nigerian authorities to take serious action to bring an end to female genital mutilation, child marriage and child labour; asks the EU to use all its tools to promote these measures, and to efficiently curb illicit financial flows and tax evasion and avoidance and boost democratic international cooperation in tax matters;
7. Welcomes the determination expressed at the Niamey Regional Summit of 20 and 21 January 2015 by the 13 participating countries, in particular the military commitment of Chad, together with Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria, to the fight against the terrorist threats of Boko Haram; encourages a strengthening of this regional response, using all existing tools and in full compliance with international law; calls on ECOWAS, in particular, to continue to make its new Counter-Terrorism Strategy operational, paying particular attention to the containment of cross-border illicit flows of arms, weapons, fighters and contraband; further insists that without such cooperation the violence is likely to continue, undermining peace and stability across the region; points, in this regard, to the pledge of allegiance made by Boko Haram to Islamic State, and to the necessity of impeding any further coordination or cooperation between the two terrorist organisations and the expansion of this threat;
8. Welcomes the initiatives of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, and calls on the African Union to engage, as a matter of urgency, in concrete action, together with all the countries involved, to coordinate the fight against terrorist groups in the Sahel region; urges the European Union to support the development of regional mechanisms for conflict management, such as the African Standby Force, as well as the possibility of recourse to the African Peace Facility and EU crisis management tools;
9. Urges the international community to do more to help the Nigerian Government fight Boko Haram and address the root causes of terrorism, as only a global response can ensure a permanent end to violence and fundamentalism;

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10. Calls for the EU and its Member States to fulfil their commitment to providing a comprehensive range of political, development and humanitarian support to Nigeria and its people in tackling the Boko Haram threat and ensuring the development of the country; urges the EU to continue political dialogue with Nigeria under Article 8 of the revised Cotonou Agreement, and in that context to address issues relating to universal human rights, including freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, and non-discrimination on any grounds, as enshrined in universal, regional and national human rights instruments;

11. Calls on the international community also to help the Nigerian refugees in neighbouring countries; urges the EU Member States to set up immediately a credible and holistic European system for managing the migration routes from sub-Saharan Africa to the Middle East and northern Africa, to offer sustainable development solutions to countries of origin, such as Nigeria, and to bring an end to the human tragedies taking place on these routes;

12. Urges the EU to investigate the financing of Boko Haram and to address the transparency of trade in all natural resources, including oil, in order to avoid any fuelling of conflicts by any company; calls on the Nigerian authorities and foreign companies to help strengthen governance in the extractives sector by abiding by the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and publishing what companies pay to the Nigerian Government;

13. Believes that the Nigerian Government has the right and responsibility to defend its people from terrorism, but insists that such actions must be conducted with respect for human rights and the rule of law;

14. Calls for thorough investigations into allegations of human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrest and extortion-related abuses, and believes that such actions cannot be justified as a means of combating the threat posed by Boko Haram or other terrorist organisations; believes that reforms of Nigeria's judicial system are urgently needed in order to provide effective criminal justice with a view to combating terrorism, as are reforms of the Nigerian state security forces;

15. Urges that wounded soldiers receive the appropriate treatment, and that girls and women who are victims of rape in the context of armed conflict be offered the full range of sexual and reproductive health services, in EU-funded humanitarian facilities, in accordance with common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, which guarantees all necessary medical care required by the condition of the wounded and sick, without making adverse distinctions;

16. Congratulates General Muhammadu Buhari as the successful presidential candidate for the All Progressives Congress (APC), and all those who have gained seats in the Senate or the House of Representatives, or been voted in as Governors or members of the State Houses of Assembly, from all parties; commends those candidates who have conceded defeat gracefully, starting with the incumbent presidential candidate Goodluck Jonathan, welcomes the continued commitment of all political parties and candidates to peaceful elections and urges them to continue to accept the results without any violence;

17. Congratulates the Nigerian people on their democratic enthusiasm and mobilisation throughout the electoral process, and asks the Nigerian authorities to reinforce good governance and to promote more accountable democratic institutions; believes that the transition of power through the ballot box demonstrates a deepening democracy in Nigeria, which could serve as a model for other African nations;

18. Welcomes the INEC's determination in undertaking a reasonably credible (as far as possible), transparent and fair electoral process despite the internal and external constraints and pressure it faced, and in particular its inclusion of people with disabilities;

19. Encourages victims to address their grievances through official dispute resolution mechanisms, and asks the Nigerian authorities to respond to each of them with a full and credible investigation and redress under the law; asks the EU to support the development of such mechanisms;

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20. Calls on the Nigerian Government to promote women's participation in public and political life;
 21. Reiterates its calls for the abolition of the anti-homosexuality law and of the death penalty;
 22. Asks the Nigerian authorities to take emergency measures in the Niger Delta, including actions to end illegal oil-related activities and to help people exposed to pollution; asks the EU and its Member States to provide technical expertise and resources to assist in restoring the area; asks all companies operating in the region to comply with the highest international standards and to refrain from any action that may take a toll on the environment and on the local communities;
 23. 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 Government and Parliament of Nigeria, and the representatives of the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union.
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