en

Publication | 15.07.2014

Nigeria, recent attacks by Boko Haram

Greens/EFA motion for resolution

Tabled by Jean Lambert, Barbara Lochbihler, Heidi Hautala, Bart Staes, Judith Sargentini, Ernest Urtasun, Ulrike Lunacek on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolutions, namely of 4 July 2013 and 15 March 2012 on the situation in Nigeria;

- having regard to the statement by the HR/VP Catherine Ashton on Nigeria of 19 June 2014 on recent attacks in Nigeria, and of 15 April 2014 condemning the abduction of girls;

- having regard to the Statement by the EEAS Spokesperson on Nigeria of 26 June 2014;

- having regard to the EU Council conclusions of 12 May 2014 on abductions in Nigeria;

- having regard to the statement on behalf of the Office of the African Union Commission (AUC) Chairperson's Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, on the Kidnapping of the Nigerian School Girls, 12 May 2014

- having regard to UN Security Council concern over the threat posed by the activities of Boko Haram in northern Nigeria and the neighbouring countries of Niger, Chad and Cameroon;

- having regard to the statement by the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Nigeria of 26 June 2014 and 30 June 2014

- having regard to the UN Secretary General's Report on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC), published on 1 July 2014,

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,

- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, ratified by Nigeria on 29 October 1993,

- having regard to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979

- having regard to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights of 1981, ratified by Nigeria on 22 June 1983,

- having regard to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion and Belief of 1981,

- having regard to the UN convention of the Rights of the Child, ratified by Nigeria in 1991,

- having regard to the second revision of the Cotonou Agreement, ratified by Nigeria on 27 September 2010;

- having regard to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria adopted on 29 May 1999, and in particular the provisions of Chapter IV on the protection of fundamental rights, including the right to life, the right to a fair hearing, the right to the dignity of human persons, and the protection of freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom of thought, freedom of conscience and freedom of religion,

- having regard to Rules 122(5) and 110(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. Concerned by the recent violent attacks carried out by Boko Haram on Nigeria's police and military, rival clerics, politicians, schools, religious buildings – both Christian and Moslem, public institutions, and civilians; whereas such violent attacks have increased regularly since 2009 and have continued to escalate while the Nigerian government hasn't been able to quell the insurgency;

B. Whereas some 270 girls have been kidnapped by Boko Haram on the 14 April 2014 from the Government Secondary School in Chibok; whereas the students are being forced into Islam, threatened with forced marriage and to slavery, and were subject to sexual violence; and whereas 219 still are missing, with over 60 escaping their perpetrators; whereas Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau said he planned to "sell" the girls in the market;

C. Whereas these abductions saw a strong response from civil society in Nigeria and throughout the world, demanding the Nigerian Government take effective action to “bring back our girls” , ensure the protection of schoolchildren and tackle the spread of Boko Haram

D. Whereas a number of governments have sent teams to advise on security and recovery of the missing schoolgirls and on tackling Boko Haram;

E. (repeats A.)Whereas Boko Haram group aims to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria, including the implementation of criminal sharia courts across the country and forbidding western education, particularly to females; whereas violent clashes between Christians and Muslims and harsh government treatment, including pervasive police brutality, encouraged the group to radicalize;

F. Whereas human rights advocates say Nigerian authorities are rarely, if ever, held criminally accountable for the public executions of Boko Haram followers;

G. Whereas Nigeria assembled a joint task force (JTF) of military and police units to battle Boko Haram in May 2013, but whereas the JTF has been implicated in extrajudicial killings of militants and civilians;

H. Whereas according to Human Rights Watch, more than twenty-five thousand people were killed in Nigeria since 1999;

I. Whereas although Nigeria is one of the world’s largest oil producers, nearly 60 % of the population live on less than a dollar a day; whereas the peaceful resolution of conflicts also implies fair access to resources and fair redistribution of revenues through the state budget;

J. Whereas the problems in the North stem from a lack of economic development, especially compared to the oil-rich south of the country , high youth unemployment and the tension revolves around the control of fertile farmlands with migrants and settlers from the Hausa-speaking Muslim north; and whereas the conflicts are being exacerbated by climate change and encroaching desert;

K. Whereas the UN estimates that 650,000 people have been displaced by the Boko Haram crisis; whereas such displacements put also a strain on meagre local food and water resources, especially in Niger, which itself struggles with food insecurity due to years of drought;

L. Whereas the violent attacks by Boko Haram in the Northern part of Nigeria continue leading to the killing, injuring and spreading terror among the civilian population; whereas Boko Haram is a growing threat for the stability of Nigeria, where security situation remains extremely difficult with the state of emergency declared and maintained since May 2013 over the states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa;

M. Whereas the escalating violence of the insurgency threatens the security of West Africa and requires a regional response;

N. Whereas Boko Haram has been added to the United Nations Al-Qaida Sanctions List which helped to close off avenues of funding, travel and weapons to Boko Haram;

O. Whereas in June 2014 the EU has swiftly transposed the UN decision to designate Boko Haram as a terrorist organization, covered by the freezing of funds and economic resources under EC Regulation No 881/2002 with (EU) Commission Implementing Regulation No 583/2014 of 28 May 2014;

P. Whereas lasting security and stability can be achieved only through an approach that includes respect for all human rights, alleviating poverty and creating jobs, strengthening rule of law and accountable governance, improving education, protecting the rights of women and girls, and including women and civil

society in efforts to resolve conflict; whereas it is therefore essential to address the structural conditions that influence this violence;

1. Strongly condemns the multiple attacks and recent atrocities perpetrated by Boko Haram, the loss of hundreds of lives and injured innocent people, the horrific abduction of more than 200 girls who are subject to sexual violence, forced marriages and slavery;

2. Expresses its sympathy and full solidarity with the victims and their families; calls for the immediate and unconditional release of the school girls and other victims of political abduction and for those responsible to be brought to justice;

3. Urges the Nigerian authorities to ensure accountability for crimes committed, to guarantee the security and protection of its population and to address impunity, while upholding the rule of law and protecting human rights.

4. Points out that Nigeria's weak political and security institutions, as well as impunity, have enabled criminal and extremist groups to operate and grow; urges accordingly the government of Nigeria to take measures to combat poor governance and corruption, mismanagement and embezzlement of the country's vast oil wealth, widespread poverty, police abuse, and longstanding impunity for a range of crimes in order to provide the basis for a long term and lasting solutions;

5. In particular, emphasises the importance of an independent, impartial and accessible judiciary system to put an end to impunity, to enhance respect for rule of law and fundamental rights of the population; accordingly, calls for improving efficiency and independence of Nigeria's judiciary system as a mean of effective use of criminal justice to combat terrorism;

6. Notes with concern that while Boko Haram is becoming more violent, state responses and police brutality and impunity added to the tensions and escalation of violence; reminds that Government's actions undertaken against Boko Haram should not lead to further fuelling of the violence; in this regard, condemns the Nigerian military for using disproportionate force in its pursuit of Boko Haram; calls for a reform of the Nigerian state security forces, including police, ensuring their proper equipment and effective democratic oversight and conducting investigations against those who are responsible for any human rights violations including extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrests, and extortion-related abuses;

7. Urges the Nigerian Government to recognise and respect freedom of the press and media and to allow journalists and reporters access to the front lines, as the press and media can play an important role in strengthening accountability and documenting human rights abuses;

8. Welcomes the response of civil society to the abductions of the schoolgirls from Chibok and their commitment to delivering education and urges the Government and regional authorities to engage with civil society as an ally for change;

9. Expresses its concern about the growing influence of Boko Haram whose reinforced position represents more and more a regional threat; in this context, underlines the importance of regional cooperation for addressing the threat posed by a possible connexion between Boko Haram and AQMI (Al Qaeda au Maghreb Islamique); encourages the countries in the region to deepen their cooperation, including through the relevant regional organisations, in order to prevent synergies between Boko Haram and AQMI;

10. Stresses that Nigeria is a country where political and socio-economic grievances are extensive and interwoven; deems therefore that, in a context where organized violence in Nigeria does not emerge in a vacuum but rather due to a complex interplay of grievances that cut across the country as well as certain regional-specific factors, the roots of grievances need to be addressed in order to stop the cycle of violence, namely political exclusion and economic inequality;

11. In particular, points out that increasing impoverishment of citizens, declining economic opportunities, and limited educational opportunities have swelled the ranks of the unemployed, which in turn offers the socio-economic basis for Boko Haram's resurgence; notes also with concern that in many regions, the state offers no water, electricity or education; urges, under these circumstances, the Nigerian authorities to address the socio-economic basis for Boko Haram's resurgence and to fight against deteriorating living standards to reach social justice;

12. Stresses the importance of continuing to increase the support for girls' education in Nigeria as a driving force for development, which also involves increasing security for schools in vulnerable areas;

13. Deplores that, despite a per capita income of more than $2,700 and vast wealth in natural resources, Nigeria has one of the world's poorest populations, where an estimated 70 percent of the population lives on less than $1.25 a day; stresses equally that while 27% of the population in the south live in poverty, this figure is at 72% in the north; furthermore, notes with concern that the north's precarious economic situation has been further undermined by desert encroachment, recurrent drought and a rinderpest pandemic;

14. Underlines that the dispute over the 2011 election results, judged to be reasonably fair by international observers, which led to more than eight hundred deaths, also played a role in Boko Haram's escalating violence; therefore, calls on the Nigerian government to address the root causes of the violence by ensuring equal rights for all citizens, i.e. by including prominent, locally respected northern Muslims in the cabinet and by addressing problems involving the control of fertile farmland, unemployment and poverty, and fight corruption, and inequality;

15. More broadly, urges the Nigerian authorities to bridge the economic divide between the north and south of the country, i.e. by providing better education and health-care services in the North and to ensure fair repartition of benefits from oil wealth to ensure proper regional development;

16. Calls on the Nigerian authorities and foreign companies to help strengthen governance in the extractives sector abide by the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and publish what companies pay to the Nigerian Government.

17. Urges the HR/VP and the EU to continue to undertake measures in Nigeria combining diplomacy with long-term development cooperation in order to achieve peace, security, good governance and respect for human rights; in particular, urges 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 ground, as enshrined in universal, regional and national human rights instruments.

18. Calls on all members of the ECOWAS to take all necessary measures to stop the proliferation of arms and drug trafficking and dismantle organised crimes, which destabilise the whole region by taking measures such as controlling arms and drug trafficking,

19. Condemns the adoption of the Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Law, criminalizing homosexuality, whereby the Nigerian government failed to fulfil obligations stemming from respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law, referred to in Article 9 (2) of the Cotonou Agreement; calls for

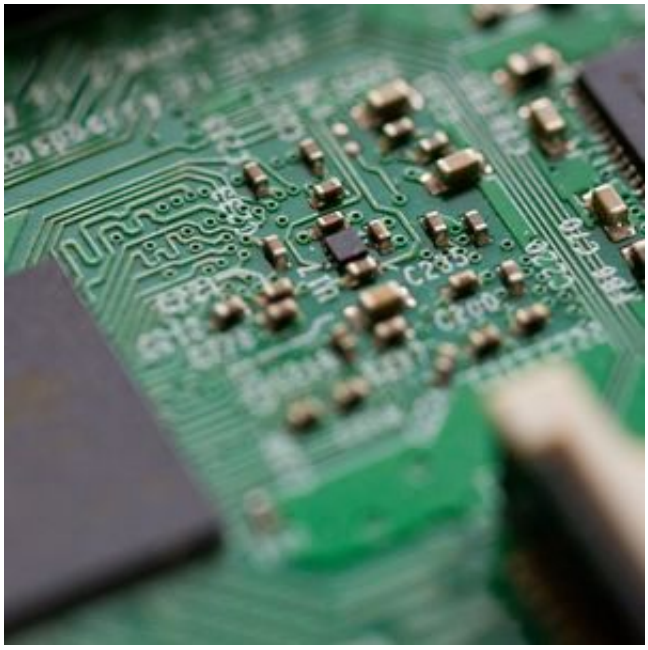
the abolition of this law, along with sections 214, 215 and 217 of the Nigerian Penal Code, which would put LGBT people—both Nigerian nationals and foreigners—at serious risk of violence and arrest; reiterates its calls on the EU Member States, or the High Representative with the support of the Commission, to consider targeted sanctions, such as travel and visa bans for the key individuals responsible for drafting and adopting the Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Law;

20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Federal Government of Nigeria, the institutions of the African Union and of ECOWAS, the United Nations Secretary-General, the United Nations General Assembly, the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and the PAN-African Parliament (PAP).

Recommended

Press release

chris-ried



Digital Fairness Act falls short on addictive design

11.11.2026

Press release

Redek Kozak



Czech public media under attack - with Markéta Gregoro…

11.11.2026

Press release

Sebastian P



Commission must overhaul EU Democracy Shield

15.09.2026

Study

©abraham osorio



REFORMING FRONTEX | A HUMAN RIGHTS - BASED REVIEW

01.07.2026

Contact person



Sabine Meyer

Advisor on Foreign Affairs

Please share

- E-Mail