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Situation in Iraq and Syria and the ISIS offensive

Greens/EFA motion for resolution

Tabled by Barbara Lochbihler, Alyn Smith, Klaus Buchner, Bodil Ceballos, Heidi Hautala, Jean Lambert, Tamás Meszerics, Michel Reimon, Judith Sargentini, Ernest Urtasun, Jordi Sebastià on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Iraq, in particular those of 17 July 2014([1](#)) and 27 February 2014([2](#)) on the situation in Iraq,
- having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria, in particular those of 12 September 2013([3](#)), 9 October 2013([4](#)), 6 February 2014([5](#)) and 17 April 2014([6](#)),
- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Iraq, of the other, and to its resolution of 17 January 2013 on the EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement([7](#)),
- having regard to the Council conclusions on Iraq, in particular those of 30 August, 15 August and 23 June 2014,
- having regard to the statements by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on Iraq and on Syria,
- having regard to the Paris International Conference on peace and security in Iraq convened by President Hollande on 15 September 2014 and the Jeddah Conference on 11 September 2014,
- having regard to the Geneva talks on Syria in February 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, to which Iraq and Syria are parties,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief

,adopted on 24 June 2013,

- having regard to the EU guidelines on the promotion of compliance with international humanitarian law,
- having regard to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols and to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,
- 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) on Iraq and on Syria,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 March 2014 on Saudi Arabia, its relations with the EU and its role in the Middle East and North Africa(8), its resolution of 24 March 2011 on European Union relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council(9) and its resolution of 3 April 2014 on the EU strategy towards Iran(10),
- having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the extremist jihadist group Islamic State (IS) – formerly the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) – has, over the past months, extended its territorial conquest from eastern Syria into north-western Iraq, including Iraq's second largest city, Mosul, followed by summary executions of Iraqi citizens and numerous atrocities particularly against Yazidis, Christians, Shiites and opposing Sunnis, the imposition of a harsh interpretation of Sharia law, rape and enslavement of women, forced conversions and the destruction of Shiite, Sufi, Sunni and Christian places of worship and shrines;

B. whereas in the latest acts of atrocity to provoke the fury of the international community ISIS has posted videos showing the execution of two American and one British hostages;

C. whereas a large portion of the Sunni population in Iraq and Syria has suffered extensively from discrimination, marginalisation, human rights violations and other forms of serious abuse committed by Iraqi and Syrian institutions and security forces and government-affiliated militias, which explains partly why the ISIS gains have been tolerated or even supported by parts of the disenchanting Sunni population;

D. whereas the IS has managed to impose its state structures in the areas under its control and declared on 29 June 2014 the restoration of the caliphate after securing significant income sources by looting banks and businesses on territories it controls, taking over up to six oilfields in Syria, including Syria's largest oil facility, the al-Omar field, close to the border with Iraq, and receiving funds from wealthy donors, particularly in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates;

E. whereas the rapid upsurge of IS has revealed the fragility of the Iraqi and the Kurdish armies, and notably of the Iraqi institutions, which are plagued by corruption, sectarianism and the exclusivist policies of the government of the Prime Minister, Nouri al-Maliki, which has contributed greatly to the substantial alienation of the Sunni and minority population in Iraq;

F. whereas the Assad regime in Syria has deliberately triggered a dynamic of sectarian polarisation as its survival strategy; whereas this dynamic has inflamed the latent and hitherto largely repressed communal tensions, notably between the ruling minority Alawite sect and the country's Sunni Muslim majority; whereas sectarianism is being further exacerbated by the involvement of regional actors, notably from the Gulf, and of jihadi and foreign extremist groups;

G. whereas military units of the Kurdish Regional Government took over control of the multi-ethnic city of Kirkuk in the middle of June 2014, thus further expanding control over disputed oil-rich territory in the oil-rich province of Kirkuk, and whereas the Kurdish Government announced plans in June for a referendum among the Kurdish population to obtain independence from Iraq, which they later postponed

in order to 'devote their efforts to forging a new Iraqi government' to fend off the IS advances;

H. whereas after the resignation of Nouri al-Maliki a new more inclusive government under the new Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi took up its duties on 8 September, although the two important portfolios of the interior and defence remain vacant;

I. whereas thousands of foreign fighters, including many from EU Member States, have reportedly joined the fighting alongside the IS; whereas several governments, notably those of Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Tunisia and Russia are taking legal and security measures to ban activities with links to IS and other extremist Islamist groups; whereas the UK and Dutch governments have announced their intention to revoke the passports of citizens returning home after having joined IS; whereas on 24 September the Security Council will discuss a US-sponsored resolution on the issue;

J. whereas the Turkish Government has finally agreed to tighten border controls with Syria in order to try to prevent further recruitment for IS; whereas Turkey has been directly targeted by IS, which has been holding 49 employees, including the General Council, of the Turkish consulate hostage in Mosul since June;

K. whereas all over the world Sunni leaders have been condemning the actions of IS as non-Islamic;

L. whereas the upsurge of IS has produced a catastrophic humanitarian crisis, with millions fleeing, particularly to the autonomous region of Kurdistan, adding to the millions already displaced by the Syrian war; whereas the EU has been further extending its humanitarian aid and has established an air bridge between Brussels and Erbil;

M. whereas different military forces, including the forces of the Kurdish Regional Government and the Iraq army, as well as armed groups, including Kurdish fighters of the PKK and YPG, and Iranian-supported Shiite militia, are trying to fend off the IS assault on Northern Iraq and Syria, supported by US air strikes;

N. whereas US President Obama has announced an open-ended campaign of airstrikes against ISIS militants in Syria in addition to those already being carried out in Iraq, and is actively building support for an international military coalition; whereas France is expected to join the military offensive in Iraq while the governments of several countries, notably Germany, have announced their intention to support Kurdish forces with arms deliveries; whereas the Assad regime has expressed its readiness to join the international effort against ISIS, while asking to give its prior consent to any strikes, and has recently been conducting airstrikes against ISIS positions;

O. whereas on 10 September in a regional meeting on IS in Jeddah, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon signed a joint communique with the US agreeing to 'join in the many aspects of the coordinated military campaign against ISIS' and to undertake a range of actions to combat terrorism, including stopping the flow of foreign fighters through neighbouring countries, countering the financing of ISIS and other terrorist groups and repudiating jihadist ideology;

1. Condemns the atrocities threatened or committed by ISIS against various groups not sharing their convictions, above all religious and ethnic minorities such as Christians, Yezidi, Shabak and Turkmen, but also Shiites and Sunnis; denounces the odious assassination by ISIS of two American journalists and a British aid worker;

2. Believes that any effective response by the international community to the nefarious acts and nature of ISIS requires a collected, inclusive and strategic plan of action, couched in international legality; in this regard, recalls the devastating and long-term consequences of the moral, legal and geopolitical failings of

the post-9/11 adventurism; stresses that unlawful or legally questionable external counter-terrorist operations, including in Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen, notably through airstrikes, have led to unacceptable casualties and further radicalisation among the local populations;

3. Stresses that ISIS represents first and foremost the consequence rather than the cause of the current convulsion which is engulfing the Middle East and beyond; urges the EU and other international leaders to identify and focus on the profound socio-economic, cultural and political roots of the ISIS phenomenon; stresses that ISIS has emerged from a bedrock of protracted human rights violations and impunity, crony capitalism, pervasive corruption, sectarianism, marginalisation and discrimination of entire groups, notably Sunnis, as well as a long history of external manipulation and intervention by regional and Western actors;

4. Takes note that the IS organisation has acquired state-like capacities and attraction and constitutes a phenomenon which carries the potential to reshape large parts of the Middle East and beyond, in accordance with its retrograde and extremist agenda;

5. Welcomes the Council decision to come to the aid of the threatened population according to the UN-defined international Responsibility to Protect, notably the activation of the European Civil Protection Mechanism and the humanitarian Air Bridge set up by ECHO; calls for additional humanitarian support for the populations affected by the conflict, including the Syrian Kurds;

6. Expresses, however, concern that the arms deliveries by some EU Member States to the Kurds or to Syrian rebels raise serious issues in relation to the EU code of conduct on arms exports, which bans the delivery of military equipment to crisis regions; expresses its serious concern that these arms could fall into the wrong hands and that needs assessment and coordination between the delivering Member States leaves much to be desired;

7. Calls for increased financial support to the Kurdish regional authority to cope with the unprecedented influx of refugees;

8. Underlines the symbolic importance of the fact that the EU decision of 15 August on Iraq was also carried by the governments of all those countries that opposed the Iraq war – and that the EU in its entirety has a historic obligation to reassure the Iraqi population that the intentions of the EU Member States are solely directed towards the defence of their peace and physical and mental integrity;

9. Welcomes the recent formation of a new, more inclusive Iraqi Government and calls on all sides to settle the conflict over oil revenue and exports between the provinces in a mutually respectful manner;

10. Calls on the Iraqi Government and Parliament to urgently review legislation and legal practice, reform its judicial system and security apparatus and implement inclusive policies towards all Iraqis to end the policy of discrimination against, notably, the Sunni population;

11. Takes note of the military attacks by US forces against IS at the request of the Kurdish and Iraqi governments, and underlines that such attacks should be strictly limited in time and goal, solely intended to stop the IS advance and based upon the premise that military means should be the last resort;

12. Regrets the fact that before the US bombing raids no prior attempt has been made to obtain UN approval in the form of a Security Council resolution;

13. Stresses that in the case of Syria, any lawful, external military intervention would require either the authorisation of the ruling Assad regime or that of the UN Security Council; underlines its absolute abhorrence of the prospect of any form of cooperation with the egregious Assad regime;

14. Recalls the particular responsibility of the Assad regime alongside that of external powers, notably Saudi Arabia and Qatar, in stoking the increasingly sectarian dimension of the war in Syria and hence fuelling the rise of ISIS; calls on the Assad regime and countries with influence over it to negotiate ceasefires with those armed opposition groups fighting the IS;
15. Remains convinced that there can be no sustainable peace in Syria and Iraq without accountability for the crimes committed by all sides during the conflict, notably for those based on religious or ethnic grounds; reiterates its call for the referral of the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court and supports all initiatives in this direction;
16. Calls on the High Representative and the EU Member States to urge EU members in the Security Council to invest all efforts in a Security Council initiative to design a regional strategy to combat the IS and Al Qaeda radicalism, which would take into account the interests of the populations in the region;
17. In view of the existential crises in the Middle East and elsewhere, calls for renewed consideration of permanent UN peace enforcement troops at the disposal of the Secretary-General, to which the EU should actively contribute;
18. Condemns the activities of those countries and/or their citizens who have given ideological or material support to IS or other extremist Islamist groups, notably Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar and Kuwait, as well as Turkey and Syria; takes note of the Jeddah declaration, and calls on all those states to take concrete measures to stop all support, whether state-sponsored or sponsored by private individuals, for IS- and Al-Qaeda-affiliated groups;
19. Underlines the importance of the countries in the region being in the driving seat in the battle against Islamist extremism, and regrets the absence of Iran at the Paris conference;
20. Insists that the EU needs to develop a genuine long-term strategy of its own towards its neighbours in the Near and Middle East, including Iran;
21. Warns against the serious risks of seeing short-term, anti-ISIS coalition-building dynamics trump any value-based considerations in the EU's engagement with regional authoritarian regimes, such as Egypt or Saudi Arabia;
22. Expresses continued support for the peace, security and development which has been achieved in the Kurdish autonomous region, which should absolutely be preserved, and appeals to the Kurds to pursue their right of self-determination in a negotiated manner;
23. Calls for an increase in the number of refugees from Iraq and Syria granted stay in Europe, including the Yezidi, who constitute a particularly fragile and often persecuted minority; believes that an international conference to coordinate the reception of refugees should be organised with all urgency and that the EU needs to set up an emergency programme to this end;
24. In view of the thousands of Europeans reportedly being recruited as fighters by IS, calls for a policy change in EU Member States that stresses the need to develop policies to address extremism among EU citizens and to actively combat social exclusion and lack of prospects, particularly in the case of the second- and third-generation immigrant population; calls for an overt campaign to enhance the notion of Islam as an integral part of European culture; condemns in this context the intention of several EU governments to revoke the citizenship of dual citizens who might return from the Middle East battlegrounds;
25. Remains gravely preoccupied by the implications of the prolonged and growing presence of Syrian

refugees in the neighbouring countries, in particular Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey; encourages the Commission and the EU Member States to continue providing substantial humanitarian assistance to the populations affected by the Syrian conflict; deplores the very limited number of Syrian refugees resettled in the EU, and calls on Member States to show a greater degree of responsibility, notably by reinforcing their protection response;

26. 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 EU Member States, the Secretary-General of the UN and the UN-Arab League Special Envoy to Syria, and the governments and parliaments of Syria and of Iraq.

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