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Situation in Nigeria

Greens/EFA motion to resolution

Tabled by ***Jean Lambert, Maria Heubuch, Heidi Hautala, Judith Sargentini, Michèle Rivasi, Ernest Urtasun, Barbara Lochbihler, Tamás Meszerics, Jordi Sebastià, Davor Škrlec*** *on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group*

The European Parliament

– having regard to its resolutions on the situation in Nigeria, namely those of 15 March 2012[1], 4 July 2013[2] and 17 July 2014[3],

– having regard to the statements by Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) Catherine Ashton of 19 June 2014 on recent attacks in Nigeria, and of 15 April 2014 condemning the abduction of girls,

– having regard to the EU Council conclusions on abduction in Nigeria of 9 February 2015,

– having regard to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 583/2014 of 28 May 2014 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 preliminary conclusions of the EU and EP Election Observation Missions,

– having regard to the statements by the High Commissioner of the United Nations for Human Rights on the possibility that members of Boko Haram could be accused of war crimes,

– having regard to the statements by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Nigeria of 26 June 2014 and 30 June 2014,

– having regard to the ECOWAS Political Declaration and Common Position against Terrorism of 2013, which provides for a regional Counter-Terrorism Strategy and an Implementation Plan to help member states to combat terrorism,

– having regard to the UN Security Council Presidential Statement of 19 January 2015, which demanded the cessation of hostilities by Boko Haram in Nigeria and the release of hostages, while on 14

February 2015 the UN Security Council condemned Boko Haram attacks, including those on civilians in Chad, Cameroon and Niger,

– having regard to the 24th African Union Summit of January 2015, which welcomed and supported the efforts deployed by Member States of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Republic of Benin to establish a Joint Military Staff Headquarters for conduct of military operations against the Boko Haram terrorist group,

– 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 Peoples' 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 on 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 Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas Nigeria is the most populous, ethnically diverse country in Africa, marked by regional and religious cleavages and a North-South divide with severe economic and social disparities;

B. whereas Boko Haram has attacked Nigeria's police and military, politicians, schools, religious buildings, public institutions and civilians with increasing regularity since 2009, while terrorist acts against civilians continued to escalate by 2013;

C. whereas in April 2014 more than 270 girls were kidnapped from a government school in Chibok (Borno state); whereas the majority remain missing; whereas since then hundreds more people have been abducted by Boko Haram;

D. whereas the attacks carried out by Boko Haram between 3 and 8 January 2015 targeted Baga and sixteen surrounding towns and villages, destroying nearly 3 700 structures and killing thousands of people;

E. whereas Boko Haram aims to establish a fully Islamic state in Nigeria, including the implementation of criminal sharia courts across the country, and to forbid western education, particularly to females;

F. whereas girls as young as 10 years old have been used to carry explosives that detonated in busy

markets and bus stations, raising fears that Boko Haram may be using some of its hundreds of kidnapped victims in bomb attacks;

G. whereas the death toll arising from Boko Haram's activities between July 2009 and July 2014 is estimated at over 22 000; while some 1.5 million people have been driven from their homes;

H. whereas according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), no fewer than six million residents of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states have been directly affected by Boko Haram attacks;

I. whereas Nigeria has committed to a national immunisation campaign to eradicate polio;

J. whereas Boko Haram's violence has led to the destruction of health facilities in the North Eastern states of Nigeria, forcing health workers to either flee or shut down clinics; whereas this has compelled residents to seek medical attention in Cameroon, Chad and Niger, thereby adding to the pressure on limited health facilities in the host communities;

K. 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 members, thereby further exacerbating food insecurity;

L. whereas Boko Haram's international connections to al-Shabaab in Somalia and Al-Quaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQUIM) provide financial support, training and equipment, but whereas Boko Haram is so diffuse that fighters associated with it do not necessarily follow the Salafi doctrine; whereas Boko Haram also generates funds i.e. through drug trafficking, smuggling, weapons trafficking, kidnappings and begging; whereas in addition, some politicians are reportedly supporting the organisation directly;

M. whereas the Nigerian Government has not been able to quell the insurgency; whereas Nigerian soldiers have carried out mass incarcerations and detentions, as well as extrajudicial killings and other large numbers of violations of human and international law;

N. whereas Nigeria assembled a joint task force (JTF) of military and police units to battle Boko Haram and declared a state of emergency in three northeast states – Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa – in May 2013, but whereas the move pushed the militants out of cities and attacks in rural areas continued;

O. whereas Boko Haram's nearly six-year insurgency spilled over from Nigeria into Cameroon in 2013 and more recently into neighbours Chad and Niger;

P. whereas in May 2014, Chad and Cameroon agreed to deploy thousands of soldiers to their borders to work together with the Nigerian army, as the Government of Nigeria has found it extremely difficult to handle the crisis;

Q. whereas because of Boko Haram insurgency, Nigeria's capacity to contribute to regional and international security as well as stability is gradually being eroded;

R. whereas the Boko Haram terrorist attacks have starkly revealed the inefficiencies of the authorities to address insecurity; whereas poor governance, omnipresent corruption and worsening socio-economic conditions in northern Nigeria are components of the security problem;

S. whereas economic growth in Nigeria is highly unequal; whereas levels of poverty and unemployment in northern Nigeria are considerably higher than in the oil-rich south;

T. whereas Boko Haram appeals to the young and poor, and whereas due to their socio-economic circumstances, they are particularly vulnerable to indoctrination and radicalisation by religious fanaticism;

U. whereas decades of economic mismanagement, instability and corruption have hindered investment in Nigeria's education and social services systems;

V. whereas the oil and gas sectors remain the main sources of revenue in Nigeria; whereas both of these sectors are located mainly in the southern part of the country; whereas the northern economy, which is dominated by agricultural production, is also experiencing the effects of climate change, deindustrialisation owing i.a. to energy shortages and the deterioration of infrastructure;

W. whereas by some estimates, between USD 3 and 8 billion of Nigerian oil is stolen annually; whereas decades of corruption and misrule have undermined the state's authority and legitimacy;

X. whereas a development-focused response to the crisis, a 'Marshall plan for the North' was announced only in April 2014 by the Nigerian authorities;

Y. whereas the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) postponed the elections from 14 and 28 February to 28 Mach and 11 April 2015, in order to enable the government to launch military actions against Boko Haram, and a regional response was launched in March 2015 with Chad and Cameroon, which enabled the presence of Boko Haram to be reduced;

Z. 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, attacks by Boko Haram to discourage voters, breaches of campaign regulations and inducement of voters;

AA. whereas on 31 March 2015, the Presidential candidate of the opposition All Progressive Congress (APC), General Muhammad Buhairi, was declared winner of the elections, and the incumbent President peacefully recognised his defeat;

1. Strongly condemns all human rights abuses by Boko Haram since 2009, including those involving violence against civilian populations, notably women and children, kidnappings, killings, hostage-taking, pillaging, rape, sexual slavery and other sexual violence, recruitment of children to act as suicide bombers, destruction of civilian property, as well as the attacks in the Lake Chad Basin region along Nigeria's borders with Chad and Cameroon and in the northern provinces in Cameroon;

2. Recalls that, while Boko Haram was becoming more violent, harsh government treatment, including pervasive police brutality, and violent clashes between Christians and Muslims enabled the group to radicalise; in particular, points out that the Nigerian police was responsible for hundreds of extrajudicial killings and disappearances each year that largely went uninvestigated and unpunished; calls for thorough investigations of the allegations of human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrest and extortion-related abuses;

3. Welcomes the determination of the INEC in undertaking a reasonably credible, transparent and fair electoral process despite the internal and external constraints and pressure it was faced with;

4. Congratulates the opposition leader Muhammad Buhairi on his Presidential win and President Jonathan on his commendable concession of defeat which created a peaceful post-electoral environment;

5. Points out that while Boko Haram's insurgency initially emerged as a localised Nigerian problem, it has, over time, transformed into a major threat to peace and security in the West African region; accordingly, calls on the Nigerian Government to develop a comprehensive strategy that addresses the root

causes of these dynamics, focusing on a soft approach that aims to erode the appeal of Boko Haram's ideology, inhibit opportunities for recruitment and radicalisation and cut off its financial funding;

6. In particular, deems that robust and targeted interventions to create jobs in Nigeria, especially in the north, and amongst the border communities of neighbouring countries at large, should form a key priority of the states to dry up Boko Haram's recruiting base;

7. Asks the newly-elected President to maintain his campaign promises and to use available resources to end the violence of Boko Haram, re-establishing stability and security over the whole country; reiterates, in this context, that a military approach alone will not suffice to counter the Boko Haram insurgency, but deems that regional peace and security will only be achieved through a multi-dimensional approach that addresses legitimate grievances, past and current human rights violations and root causes of the conflict;

8. Recalls that while Nigeria is Africa's largest economy, largest oil producer and most populous country, its human development indicators are among the world's lowest, and a majority of the population lives in extreme poverty;

9. Recalls that Boko Haram's origins are rooted in grievances over poor governance, pervasive corruption and sharp inequality in Nigerian society; in a context where levels of poverty and unemployment in northern Nigeria are considerably higher than in the oil-rich south, urges the newly-elected President to implement the 'Marshall plan for the North'; in particular, urges the Nigerian authorities to eliminate corruption, mismanagement and inefficiencies within the public institutions, to provide better education and health care services in the north and to ensure fair repartition of benefits from oil wealth to ensure proper regional development;

10. 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;

11. In a context where state responses and police brutality and impunity added to the tensions and escalation of violence, stresses that improving the human rights record of the Nigerian security forces is essential to combat Boko Haram, since it could boost public confidence in the Nigerian security forces, thus encouraging citizens to share information on the insurgents and their collaborators;

12. More broadly, urges the newly-elected President to eradicate the root causes of radicalisation; this should include measures that put an end to the culture of entrenched impunity and human rights abuses, i.e. by pursuing vigorous reforms of the judicial system; actively engage in addressing the governance deficit and corruption at all levels; adopt measures to deprive Boko Haram of its sources of illegal income, through cooperation with neighbouring countries, in particular with regard to smuggling and trafficking; step up measures to reverse negative socio-economic disparities; encourage and facilitate dialogue across all Nigerian states, ethnic and religious groups, with a view to embarking on a comprehensive decentralisation reform process;

13. Reiterates its call for the immediate release of those who have been abducted, including the girls from Chibok; stresses that those responsible for all abuses and violations of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law must be held accountable;

14. Urges 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, including abortion, in EU-funded humanitarian facilities, in accordance with the Geneva Conventions' common Article 3 guaranteeing all necessary medical care required by the condition of the wounded and sick, and without adverse distinction;

15. Reiterates its calls for the abolition of the Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) 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;

16. Stresses that Nigeria cannot fully achieve its potential as a stable regional leader until it successfully overcomes the challenge of Boko Haram; 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 and Nigeria, to the fight against the terrorist threats of Boko Haram; encourages a strengthening of this regional response;

17. 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 countries involved, to coordinate the fight against terrorist groups in the Sahel region; but recalls that measures taken to combat the terrorist threat of Boko Haram should be conducted in line with international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law;

18. Calls on ECOWAS to continue the operationalisation of its new Counter-Terrorism Strategy, paying particular attention to the containment of trans-border illicit flows of arms, weapons, fighters and contraband; likewise, deems that the ECOWAS strategy should include a soft approach of improving state services, strengthening of governance and humanitarian aid for those affected by terrorism; urges the EU to facilitate intra-regional initiatives;

19. Is deeply concerned about the growing humanitarian crises caused by the activities of Boko Haram, which has resulted in the large-scale displacement of Nigerians within the country and into neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Niger; calls on countries of the region to give the highest priority to the protection of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons;

20. Urges the VP/HR and the EU to remain committed to their diplomatic efforts in Nigeria, with humanitarian aid assistance to the populations affected by the crisis as well as long-term development cooperation in order to achieve peace, security, good governance and respect for human rights; in particular, urges them 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;

21. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and 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 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).

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[1] OJ C 251E, 31.8.2013, p. 97.

[2] Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0335.

[3] Texts adopted, P8_TA(2014)0008.

Recommended

Publication



Call for tenders: Greens/EFA Consultation widget

18.10.2026

Publication



Call for tenders: The Greens/EFA CRM Software

08.10.2026

Publication



[Human Resources Management System]

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Publication



[Heads of national delegations in the GREENS/EFA Group]

11.03.2025

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