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Syria

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria, in particular of 15 December 2011 on the situation in Syria, of 27 October on the situation in Egypt and Syria, in particular of Christian communities and the case of Rafah Nached, of 15 September 2011 on the situation in Syria, of 7 July 2011 on the situation in Syria, Yemen and Bahrain in the context of the situation in the Arab world and North Africa,

- having regard to the conclusions on Syria of the Foreign Affairs Council of 23 January 2012 and of the European Council conclusions of 23 October and 9 December 2011,

- having regard to Council Decision 2011/782/CFSP of 1 December 2011 concerning restrictive measures against Syria and repealing Decision 2011/273/CFSP, and to its decision following the Foreign Affairs Council of 23 January 2012 to reinforce the EU's restrictive measures against the Syrian regime,

- having regard to the statements of the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) on Syria of 2011, of 23 January 2012 and of 4 February 2012 following the veto of the UNSC Resolution on Syria,

- having regard to the Arab League monitoring mission to Syria headed by Ambassador Adnan al-Khodeir which was suspended on 28 January 2012,

- having regard to the statements of the Arab League on the situation in Syria of 2011 and of 22 January 2012, its initiative to seek UNSC support for a political solution, its Action Plan of 2 November 2011 and the Arab League's sanctions against Syria adopted on 27 November 2011,

- having regard to the decision of 1 December 2011 by Turkey to adopt sanctions against Syria,

- having regard to the resolutions of the UN Human Rights Council on the grave human rights violations in the Syrian Arab Republic in the Syrian Arab Republic of 2 December 2011 and of 22 August 2011,

- having regard to the report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic of 23 November 2011,

- having regard to the UNGA Resolution on Human Rights in Syria of 22 November 2011,

- having regard to the resolution of the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic of 22 November 2011,

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

– having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on economic, social and economic rights, the Convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, the Convention on the rights of the child and the optional protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide to which Syria is party,

– having regard to Rule 110(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the UN estimates that the death toll in Syria passed over 5 400 in the 11-month long uprising while underlining the difficulty to update these figures because of totally closed areas such as parts of Homs; whereas thousands more have been injured, at least 69 000 have been detained of which about 32 000 had been released and about 12 400 have fled into neighbouring countries; whereas the UN Children Fund reports hundreds of children have been killed and hundreds more arbitrarily arrested, tortured and sexually abused while in detention;

B. whereas, since the beginning of February, Syrian troops further intensified their attacks against non-violent civilians and bombed residential neighbourhoods of Homs, the northern province of Idlib, the southern region of Daraa and the mountain town of Zabadani causing dozens of killings and an alarming humanitarian situation, notably regarding medical supplies and access to food;

C. whereas residents inside the besieged city of Homs are under a massive continuous bombardment and fear that the regime is preparing to make a final deadly ground assault; whereas on 12 February 2012 Arab media has been reporting that Syrian tanks and artillery are heavily bombarding the city of Hama, along with the continued assault of Homs; whereas, at the same time, the Syrian authorities insist on confronting “terrorist groups” and will continue until “order” is restored;

D. whereas the Arab League agreed on 22 January 2012 on a path forward in Syria that called on Bashar al-Assad to delegate powers to his vice-President following the formation of a national unity government while implying the start of a dialogue with the opposition; whereas the Syrian regime rejected the Arab League’s plan which it viewed as a blatant intervention in its internal affairs;

E. whereas the Arab League decided to seek the UNSC support for a political solution in Syria; whereas on 4 February 2012 the Russian Federation and China vetoed a UNSC resolution that backed the Arab League call for an inclusive and peaceful Syrian-led political process; whereas on 28 January 2012 the Arab League monitoring mission in Syria was suspended due to the critical deterioration of the situation;

F. whereas a day after the decision by the Russian Federation and China to veto for the second time a UNSC resolution on Syria, intensified security operations were reported all around the country and notably, in the neighbourhoods of Homs; whereas the Syrian opposition states that the renewed veto will encourage the government to act without restraint; whereas the recent visit in Syria of Russia’s Foreign Affairs Minister and intelligence chief who pushed for a solution that would include reforms by the regime and a dialogue with the opposition was followed by major military assaults targeting government opponents;

G. whereas, on 11 January 2012, a pro-Assad demonstration in the city of Homs was targeted by a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) which resulted in the death of France 2 TV reporter Gilles Jacquier and many injured civilians; whereas there are allegations that the attack was ordered by the regime as the event occurred at a time when France, along with Turkey, the US and other countries, is accusing the Syrian government of escalating its attacks against the population of Homs and is intervening to support rebel forces; whereas international journalists are mainly denied access to Syria so as to prevent them to carry out their role of providing independent information on the situation in Syria;

H. whereas the Foreign Affairs Council of 23 January 2012 encourages the Syrian opposition to make all efforts to strengthen coordination on the way forward in order to realise an orderly transition to a Syria that is democratic, stable, inclusive and that guarantees minority rights;

I. whereas in response to the continuing and worsening human rights situation, the Council reinforced once again the EU's restrictive measures against the Syrian regime adding 22 persons responsible for human rights violations and eight entities financially supporting the regime to the list of those subject to an asset breeze and a ban entering the EU; whereas on 27 February 2012 the European Union is expected to impose harsher sanctions against Syria;

J. whereas in response to the increasing violence and serious security concerns United States has closed its embassy in Syria; whereas France, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, United Kingdom, Germany and Belgium have recalled their ambassadors; whereas the Gulf Cooperation Council and Tunisia recalled its ambassadors and decided to expel Syrian ambassadors from their capitals;

K. whereas UN Human Rights Commissioner called for Syria to be referred to the ICC over allegations of crimes against humanity following December's Special session of the UNHRC on Syria based on the findings of the UN Independent Commission of Inquiry's report while UN Secretary-general stated on 15 January 2012 that the path of repression is a dead end; whereas only the UNSC could refer the case to the ICC, as it did in the case of Libya, as Syria is not a state party to the Rome statute;

L. whereas tens of thousands of Syrian refugees have sought refuge in Turkey since March 2011; whereas on 7 February 2012 Turkish Prime Minister addressing to his parliamentary group said that Turkey is helping to prepare a new initiative with Western allies that support opponents of the Syrian regime; whereas Turkey is hosting a number of Syrian opposition leaders, including some from the Free Syrian Army, drawn mainly from defectors from the Syrian armed forces and aimed at protecting the population from Syrian troops' attacks;

1. Condemns in the strongest terms the escalation of the Syrian regime's violent and brutal attacks again its own people and in particular in the city of Homs, the third-biggest Syrian urban centre, that is suffering from continuous and heavy shelling since the beginning of February; urges the Syrian regime to end immediately the killing of civilians, to withdraw the Syrian troops from besieged cities and to release all detained protesters, political prisoners, human rights defenders, bloggers and journalists;

2. Extends its condolences to the families of the victims; reiterates its solidarity with the Syrian people's non-violent struggle for freedom, dignity and democracy and applauds their determination and ability to organise themselves as opposition forces, with special regard to women who play a crucial role in this struggle;

3. Calls for the stepping down of Bashar al Assad whose regime has failed to meet its responsibility to protect its population according to the International Law and lost any legitimacy; recalls the main findings of the report of the UN Independent Commission of Inquiry on Syria which stated that crimes against humanity may have been committed in the country; takes the view that clear mechanisms for accountability must be at the heart of the UNSC's efforts to end the Syrian crisis while endorsing once

again the call by UN Human Rights Commissioner for referring Syria to the ICC with the aim to conduct independent and impartial investigations into the events in Syria, to hold account all suspected perpetrators of such grave crimes and to avoid more victims; urges at the same time the UNSC to put in place an UN arms embargo against the Syrian regime;

4. Strongly condemns the decision taken by the Russian Federation and China the UNSC resolution on Syria that backed the Arab League plan which required Syria to halt the bloodshed, withdraw troops from cities, free detained, provide access for the monitors and the media and open talks with the opposition; urges the Russian Federation to halt immediately all arms sales, defence equipment and airplanes delivery to the Syrian regime that could be used against civilians; deplores the decision of the 10th of January 2012 by Cypriot authorities not to stop a Russia vessel, in the port of Limassol, carrying weapons and ammunitions for the Syrian security forces although Cyprus is obliged to implement the EU arms embargo; calls on the HR/VP to firmly condemn their completely irresponsible veto and to make clear to both countries on the serious consequences should the support to Assad continues; calls also on the HR/VP to work for intensifying the dialogue with both the Russian Federation and China, stressing the need for the two countries to live up to their global responsibilities with regard to the ongoing severe human rights violations;

5. Strongly supports the efforts of the League of Arab States to end the violence, to promote a political solution in Syria and to provide all forms of political and material support to the Syrian opposition; welcomes the Arab League's call of the 12th of February 2012 on the UNSC to send a joint UN-Arab peacekeeping mission to Syria in order to replace the Arab League monitoring mission; urges the HR/VP and EU Member States to do their utmost to pave the way for the Russian Federation's support of the Arab League's peacekeeping initiative; firmly encourages the HR/VP, the Council and EU Member States to continue cooperating closely with Turkey and neighbouring countries of Syria, the Arab League and other international actors and to engage in the launching of a contact group in order to find a common position for the solution of the crisis, to help the opposition forces in their struggle by providing them material and technical support, including satellite images and communication tools, while stepping up the pressure on the Syrian regime in order to stop the military escalation on its own people; strongly supports the proposal by Tunisia to host the meeting of "Friends of Syria" contact group on 24 February 2012, a plan initiated by France and the United States after Russia and China blocked the UNSC resolution; calls in this spirit for the immediate setting-up of an EU Special Envoy on Syria;

6. Considers the call by the Syrian National Council to establish humanitarian safe corridors aimed at securing the most vulnerable population and granting unhindered access to humanitarian aid, including medical care, as well as to information and communication services; calls on the HR/VP, the Council and EU Member States to explore the option of setting up humanitarian safe corridors, within the UNSC in the framework of the responsibility to protect, in close cooperation with Turkey and the Arab League with a view to shelter and improve the situation of the Syrian population; calls in particular on the HR/VP to provide emerging organisations aimed at supporting Syrian free media such as the French-based "association de soutien aux médias libres" (ASML) with adequate EU financial aid;

7. Strongly supports Turkish Foreign Minister's initiative, backed by most of the Arab League members, who is currently working towards the organisation of a conference of "Syrian friendly nations," geared at recognizing the Syrian opposition forces as the country's sole representative and as an alternative to Assad's regime; welcomes Turkeys strong support for the Syrian population, including by accepting refugees along the Turkish-Syrian border and allowing the Syrian opposition to organise and calls on Turkey to continue to do so;

8. Welcomes all efforts done so far by the Syrian opposition to unify outside and within the country; calls for a peaceful and genuine transition to democracy, which meets the legitimate demands of the Syrian people and is based on an inclusive dialogue involving all democratic forces and components of Syrian

society with a view to launching a process of deep democratic reforms; calls on the EU to support all attempts by the Syrian opposition to unite and establish a clear agenda for a democratic Syria;

9. Calls on the Council and EU Member States to continue to press for increased international pressure on the Syrian regime; calls on EU Member States to restrict diplomatic ties with Syria and to expel Syrian Ambassadors and to take other appropriate measures concerning EU-based Syrian diplomats in case of harassment or threatening against people in the EU;

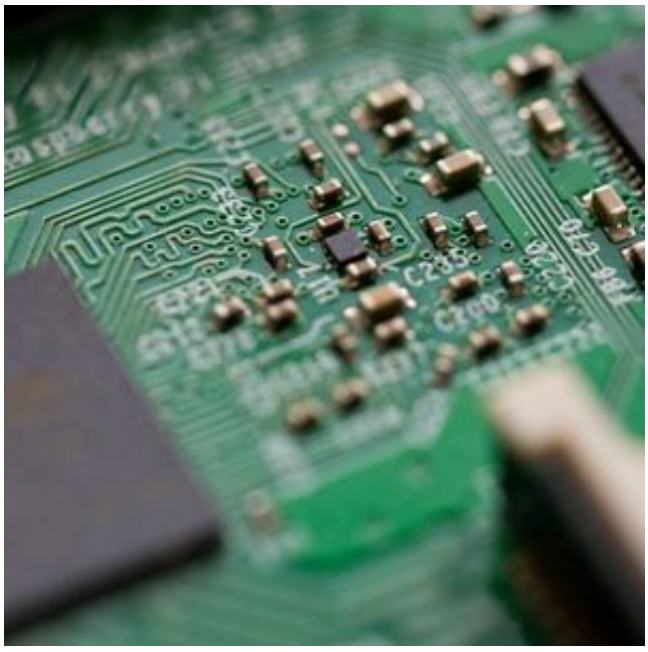
10. Supports the decision of the Foreign Affairs Council of 23 January 2012 to adopt new restrictive measures and calls on stronger sanctions targeting Syrian regime to be taken on 27 February 2012 taking into consideration recent reports according to which the Syrian regime intends to counter restrictive measures particularly through cooperation with Iran;

11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the government and parliament of the Russian Federation, the government and parliament of the People's Republic of China, the government and parliament of the Syrian Arab Republic, and the government and parliament of the Republic of Turkey.

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