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The situation in Syria

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

The European Parliament,

– having regard to its previous resolutions on Syria, in particular 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 statements of the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) on Syria of 8 October 2011, 3 and 28 November 2011 and 2 December 2011, and the one of her spokesperson of 22 November 2011,

– having regard to the conclusions on Syria of the Foreign Affairs Council of 10 October 2011, of 14 November 2011 and of 30 November and 1 December 2011 and the European Council conclusions of 23 October 2011,

– having regard to Council Decision 2011/522/CFSP amending Decision 2011/273/CFSP concerning restrictive measures against Syria, Council Decision 2011/523/EU partially suspending the application of the Cooperation Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Syrian Arab Republic, Council Regulation (EU) No 878/2011 of 2 September 2011 amending Regulation (EU) No 442/2011 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Syria, Council Regulation (EU) No 1011/2011 of 13 October 2011 amending Regulation (EU) No 442/2011 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Syria, and Council Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1244/2011 of 1 December 2011 implementing Regulation (EU) no 442/2011 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Syria,

- having regard to the statements of the Arab League on the situation in Syria of 27 August 2011, 16 October 2011 and 12, 16 and 24 November 2011, its Action Plan of 2 November 2011 and the Arab League's sanctions against Syria adopted on 27 November 2011,

- having regard to the resolutions of the UN Human Rights Council adopted at its 17th special session on the grave human rights violations in the Syrian Arab Republic of 22 August 2011, the Report of the independent international commission of enquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic of 23 November 2011 and its resolution of 2 December 2011 on the Human Rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic,

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

– 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(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas according to UN estimates, since the start of the violent crackdown on peaceful protesters in Syria in March 2011, more than 4 000 people have lost their lives, including 307 children and thousands more have been injured, arrested, tortured or disappeared as a result of the brutal repression by the Syrian regime against its population; whereas the UNHRC resolution of 2 December highlights in particular the extensive violations of children's rights and the sexual violence against civilians, including against male detainees and children, committed by the Syrian armed and security forces;

B. whereas following the special session of UN Human Rights Council on Syria UN High Commissioner called for Syria to be referred to the International Criminal Court over allegations that its crackdown on protesters led to crimes against humanity and underlined that in light of the manifest failure of the Syrian authorities to protect citizens, the international community needs to take urgent and effective measures aimed at protecting the population;

C. whereas according to the UN report of the independent international commission of inquiry numerous defections from military and security forces have occurred since the beginning of the crackdown and have increased in recent months;

D. whereas the uprising and the popular resistance against the Assad' regime seem not to be weakened or intimidated by the violent repression but, on the contrary, looks like it is gaining ground in some of the main cities of the country and as soon as there are more and more defectors threatening to take up arms, there is going to be a civil war that could destabilise the whole region;

E. whereas on 16 November 2011 the Arab League suspended Syria's membership from the regional organization after it failed to honour the terms of an Arab League peace plan that involved Syria withdrawing tanks from restive cities, stopping attacks on protesters, engaging in dialogue with the opposition and allowing a 500 Arab League monitors into the country to assess the situation on the ground; whereas after numerous ultimatums on 27 November 2011 the Arab League approved sanctions against Syria, including an asset freeze and an embargo on investments;

F. whereas on 30 November 2011 Turkey announced an asset freeze of the Syrian government in Turkey, a travel ban on Syrian leaders, a halt of the relations between the Turkish and Syrian central banks and a block to delivery of all weapons and military equipment to Syria through Turkey;

G. whereas in light of the continued repression in the country, the EU decided on 2 December to adopt further restrictive sanctions against Syria related to the energy, financial, banking and trade sectors and including additional individuals and entities that are involved in the violence or directly supporting the regime; whereas EU sanctions came in harmony with new US sanctions;

H. whereas on 20 November, in an interview published by the Sunday Times and on 7 December 2011 in an interview with the US network ABC, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad denied that his government

had a policy to treat the population harshly and that that he felt no guilt about his crackdown on a 10-month uprising, despite reports of brutality by security forces;

I. whereas on 22 November 2011 Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton met with representatives of the Syrian National Council and highlighted the importance of an inclusive opposition political platform taking in all religious and ethnic communities;

J. whereas on 4 December 2011 Syrian authorities arrested the blogger Razan Gazzawi at the Syrian-Jordanian border as she allegedly was heading to Amman to take part in a workshop on press freedom organised by her employer the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression;

K. Expresses its concern at the news reported by many sources that Syrian authorities have ordered the expulsion of Father Paolo dall'Oglio, the Abbot of the Mar Musa Monastery in Syria, and winner of the first Anna Lindh EuroMed Award 2006 for Dialogue between Culture, widely known for his work for inter-faith harmony in the country for the last three decades and for his engagement in efforts for internal reconciliation, based on negotiation, and freedom of expression; calls on the Syrian authorities to refrain from this act that could weaken the ongoing dialogue between Christians and Muslims;

1. Firmly reiterates its condemnation of the disproportionate and brutal use of force against peaceful protesters and the continued widespread systematic and gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms by the Syrian authorities, such as arbitrary executions, the killing and persecution of pro-democracy activists, human rights defenders and journalists, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, torture and ill-treatment, including of children

2. Points out that, under the international human rights law, such violations may amount to crimes against humanity; takes the view that the UNSC should refer Syria to the International Criminal Court (ICC) with the aim to end impunity , to hold account those responsible for human rights violations and to avoid more victims;

3. Stresses one again that the Syrian government has failed to meet its responsibility to protect its population, to immediately put an end to all human rights violations and to stop any attacks against civilians; considers that in light of failure, the international community needs to take urgent and appropriate measures

4. Calls for the stepping down of Bashar al Assad whose regime has lost any legitimacy after the ongoing persistent ruthless crack-down on the Syrian population; takes the view that his resignation would pave the way and facilitate the transition process which should be based on a credible and inclusive dialogue involving all democratic forces and components of Syrian society with a view to launching a process of deep democratic reforms;

5. Expresses once more its solidarity and its firm support to the struggle of the Syrian people for freedom, democratic changes and the end of the authoritarian regime; welcomes and encourages the ongoing efforts by the Syrian opposition both within and outside the country to establish a united platform and to work for a shared vision for the future of Syria and the transition to a democratic system; stresses the importance of the Syrian opposition and the Free Syrian Army committing to human rights and fundamental freedoms and maintaining a clear commitment to a peaceful and inclusive approach.

6. Strongly supports the efforts of the Arab League to bring about an end to the repression in Syria and provide protection to civilians by deploying an observer mission on the ground; welcomes the significant decision of the Arab League to impose sanctions against the Syrian regime due to its repeated

failure to deliver on its promises concerning the implementation of the Arab Plan of Action;

7. Welcomes the condemnation and economic sanctions by Turkey against the Syrian regime and its role in accepting refugees; calls on the Turkish government to maintain its policy of keeping the borders open for refugees and not to undertake any forced returns, to provide Syrian refugees with adequate information on their rights, to guarantee them access to international protection and asylum procedure and to offer long-term solutions for the remaining people who cannot, or do not wish to, return to Syria, to grant international organisations and NGOs full access to refugee camps and to lift its geographical limitation on the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees

8. Strongly supports the adoption of new EU sanctions against the Syrian regime that include the ban on export of key equipment, technology and software intended for use in the monitoring of internet and telephone communications by the Syrian regime; underlines the need for the EU to implement those restrictive measures as soon as possible and to find ways so that these sanctions do not hit or affect directly or indirectly the civilian population whose daily life has been deeply deteriorating over the last months

9. Underlines the call made by Syrian opponents and demonstrators for the sending of international observers to deter attacks against civilians and full access of international humanitarian and human rights organisations as well as of international media to the country;

10. Urges the HR/VP to make every effort in order to start discussions with Turkey, the Arab League and the Syrian opposition about the modalities of setting up humanitarian corridors at the Syrian-Turkish borders within the framework of the UNSC with a view to protecting Syrian refugees and all civilians trying to flee the country escaping the ongoing military repression;

11. Deeply regrets the attitude of Russia and China by vetoing the adoption of UN Security Council resolution against the Syrian regime even after months of ongoing brutal abuses by President Assad ; strongly 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 in order to find a common position for the solution of the crisis at the UNSC and step up the pressure on the Syrian regime in order to stop the military escalation on its own people;

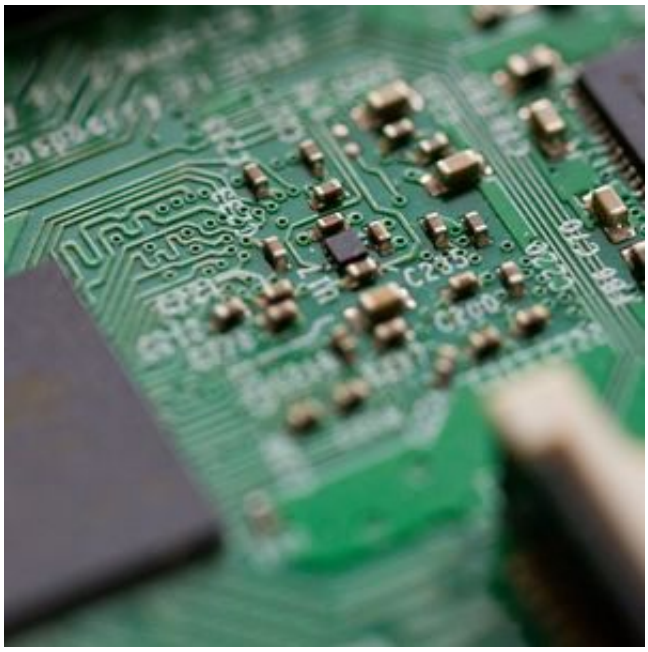
12. Welcomes the decision of the UN Human Rights Council to establish a mandate for a Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Syria; reiterates its call for an independent, transparent and effective investigation into the killings, arrests, arbitrary detention, and alleged forced disappearances, sexual violations and instances of torture by the Syrian security forces in order to ensure that the perpetrators of such acts are held to account; calls on the Syrian authorities to grant unhindered access to humanitarian agencies and workers, including medical care, without any discrimination or control and to allow independent and international media to operate in Syria without restrictions;

13. .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 European Commission, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the parliament and the government of Syria, the Secretary General of the Arab League and the Secretary General of the United Nations;

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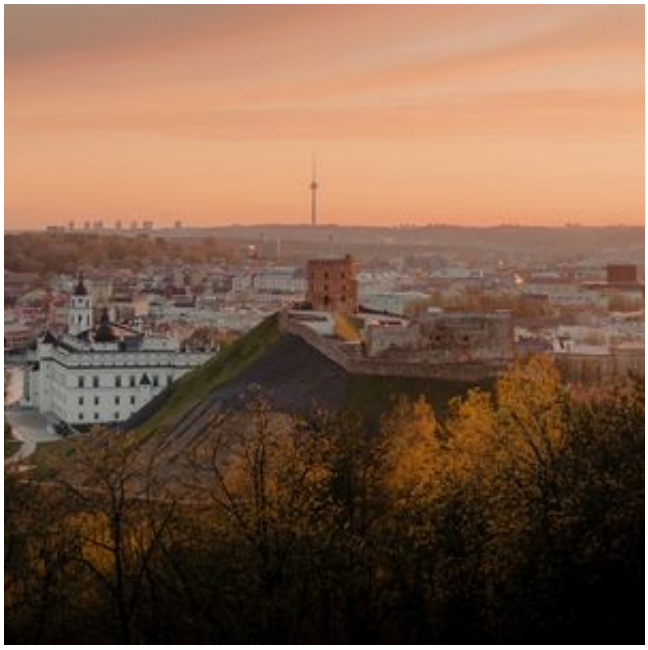
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