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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 16 February 2012 and 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 July 2012 and of the European Council of 29 June 2012,

- having regard to Council Decisions concerning restrictive measures against the Syrian regime which brings the total number of persons subject to sanctions to 155 whereas 52 entities are now affected by an EU asset freeze and having regard to the Council Decision of 23 July 2012 to take steps to limit arms deliveries to Syria,

- having regard to the numerous statements of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on Syria, in particular Catherine Ashton's remarks before Gymnich meeting in Cyprus of 7 September 2012 and following that meeting of 8 September 2012 and those of 5 September 2012 and of 18 August 2012 on the appointment of Mr Lakhbar Brahimi as UN-LAS Joint Special Representative for Syria,

- having regard to the statements of EU Commissioner Georgieva on UN Security Council debate in Syria of 29 August 2012 and on worsening humanitarian crisis of 31 July 2012,

- having regard to the three-day visit of the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross to Syria of 4 September 2012,

- having regard to UN Security Council resolutions 2059 of 20 July 2012, 2043 of 21 April 2012, and 2042 of 14 April 2012,

- having regard to the decision of 13 August 2012 of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to suspend Syria's membership,

- having regard to the resolution of 1 June 2012 adopted by the UNHRC on the deteriorating situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic, and the recent killings in El-Houleh,

- having regard to the report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic of 15 August 2012, pursuant to UNHRC resolution of 23 March 2012, in which the Council extended the mandate of the Commission established by the UNHRC in its resolution of 22 August 2011,

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

– having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ICCPR), the International Covenant on economic, social and economic rights (ICESCR), the Convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment (CAT), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 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, the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and its additional protocol relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts to which Syria is party,

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

A. Whereas in recent months the human rights and security situation deteriorated significantly, with armed violence increasing in intensity and spreading to Damascus, Aleppo and other cities throughout the country; whereas Syrian government forces increasingly deployed troops and used aircrafts and artillery against densely populated neighbourhoods falling under siege and bombardment,

B. Whereas the militarisation of the conflict and the disregard for international human rights and humanitarian law has led to a severe internal displacement crisis and has deepened the humanitarian crisis; whereas the number of people in urgent need of assistance reached over 1.5 million people and continues to rise sharply; whereas the Syrian regime has deliberately cut-off access to food, water, electricity and medical supplies to entire communities such as in Homs and more recently, in Aleppo,

C. Whereas in August an estimated 5,000 people were killed as a result of the on-going fighting, leaving over 20,000 people dead since the start of the conflict, according to UN estimates, and more than 100,000 refugees are believed to have fled Syria during the same month, Top of Form

D. Whereas the continuous unrest has had a direct impact on neighbouring countries as Syrian refugees have continued to cross the borders of Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey at an average rate of 500 - 2000 per day, with a total number of refugees which stands at over 235,300, according to the UNHCR; whereas over 75 per cent of these refugees are women and children; whereas Turkey has asked the UN Security Council to consider setting up a safe zone for civilians guarded by neighbouring countries; whereas Russia and China have opposed the idea of buffer zones saying that they would only worsen violence in the country,

E. Whereas the EU has already provided over 146 million euros in humanitarian assistance and announced during the Gymnich meeting in Cyprus of 8 September 2012 that additional 50 million euros will serve to support people in need of humanitarian assistance within Syria and those who are coming across the borders,

F. Whereas the latest report of the UN Independent Commission of Inquiry (CoI) on Syria to be presented during the HCR 21st session concludes that torture and murder were perpetrated against civilians in a widespread or systematic manner by the Syrian government and Shabbiha fighters and constitute crimes against humanity in international humanitarian law,

G. Whereas the President of the ICRC met recently with President Bashar al-Assad and requested to visit all persons detained in Syria as well as to allow unfettered access to humanitarian aid, including medical care,

H. Whereas over the last months high level defections have taken place, including Brigadier-General of the Syrian Revolutionary Guard Manaf Tlass, Syrian Prime Minister Riyad Hijab, senior diplomats and higher-ranking officers,; whereas defectors called on Syrians to unite and start building a post-President Bashar al-Assad Syria,

I. Whereas the Syrian conflict is affecting the entire region and external actors of neighbouring countries are believed to be involved in operations to actively support Assad regime; whereas incursions and shelling have been reported along Lebanon's border with Syria as well as kidnappings that have taken place in Syria and Lebanon; whereas on 4 August 2012 the HR/VP called on the Lebanese authorities to respect their legal obligation as a party to the UN Convention against Torture and to stop expulsions of Syrian nationals to Syria,

J. Whereas on 2 August 2012 Kofi Annan announced his resignation as EU-LAS Joint Special Envoy for Syria as a result of Syrian regime intransigence, increasing armed violence and the failure of a divided Security Council to rally forcefully behind his efforts; whereas consequently the UN decided to end the observer mission which was deployed to monitor a ceasefire between the government and opposition forces agreed as part of Kofi Annan's six-point peace plan and to set up a liaison office in Damascus,

K. Whereas the Syrian opposition issued on 3 July 2012 a Common Vision of a political transition and a National Pact establishing justice, democracy and pluralism as the constitutional foundations of the future Syria; whereas they failed at this occasion to agree on the election of an opposition government that would represent them at the international level,

1. Condemns once again in the strongest terms the increasing violent and indiscriminate attacks by the Syrian regime against civilian populations which constitutes a violation of international law and of the commitment of the Syrian authorities , under UNSC resolutions 2042 (2012) and 2043 (2012), to cease violence in all its forms, including the cessation of the use of heavy weapons in population centres;

2. Strongly condemns the widespread or systematic practice of extrajudicial executions, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance, torture and sexual violence against men, women and children committed by government forces, including pro-government militias and Shabbiha, directed against civilians as State policy;

3. Urges Syrian authorities to commit with the rules of international humanitarian law and to immediately allow full and unimpeded access to the country for humanitarian assistance and medical care to all those who are in urgent need of aid so as to avoid civilian loss of life; notes in this respect the recent positive commitments expressed by President Bashar al-Assad to the President of the ICRC and calls for a close follow-up;

4. Extends its condolences to the families of the victims; reiterates its solidarity with the Syrian people' struggle for freedom, dignity and democracy and applauds their courage and determination, with special regard to women;

5. Reiterates its call for President Bashar al-Assad and his regime to step aside immediately to allow a democratic and peaceful transition to take place in the country;

6. Welcomes the commitment of the EU to continue to press for increased international pressure on the Syrian regime and takes note of the 17 rounds of sanctions adopted so far, including a freeze on the assets

of 155 persons and 52 entities, embargos on oil imports and arms exports, in particular by imposing the obligation to inspect all vessels and aircraft bound for Syria in EU seaports and airports as decided on 8 August 2012; calls on the Council to consider the adoption of additional restrictive measures against external actors and groups involved in operations on the ground to actively support Bashar al-Assad regime;

7. Strongly deplores the failure of the UNSC to give an adequate response to the increasing use of indiscriminate violence due to the opposition of the Russian Federation and China and urges both countries to uphold their responsibilities under international law; calls once again on the HR/VP to make clear to the Russian Federation and China on the serious consequences should the support to President Bashar al-Assad continues; endorses once again the calls of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court and calls on the EU Foreign Ministers to support that call;

8. Underlines the necessity for the EU to stand ready to adopt further measures and to continue to explore within the UNSC all options in the framework of the Responsibility To Protect in close cooperation with US, Turkey and the Arab League in order to assist the Syrian people and to halt the bloodshed; calls on the HR/VP to initiate an International Conference with all key players of the region in order to coordinate efforts for urgent humanitarian needs and cope with all aspects of the Syrian crisis to prepare a political transition;

9. Calls on the EU to enhance its support to neighbouring countries providing assistance and protection to an increasing number of refugees and calls for an open border policy for those seeking protection; calls on the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to explore with the Israeli government the possibility to open Israel's borders to refugees from Syria; urges at the same time EU Member Sates to fully examine Syrian applications for asylum and to resettle refugees from Syria so as to provide them with shelter options within the EU and in particular, the few refugees remaining in the Al Hol camp near the Turkish and Iraqi borders, that is comprised mainly of Palestinian refugees from Iraq who for years have been on the UNHCR's lists for resettlement and who have been visited by a delegation of the European Parliament in 2010.

10. Welcomes the adoption by the Syrian opposition of a National Pact and of a Common Political Vision for the transition in Syria issued following the conference of 2/3 July 2012 held under the auspices of the League of Arab States in Cairo and calls on Syrian opposition forces within and outside the country to overcome their internal divisions and to unite so as to form a provisional, inclusive and representative government that would represent them at the international level; calls on the Free Syrian Army to respect the international humanitarian and human rights law and to grant such commitments on the ground;

11. Strongly condemns the expressed willingness by the Syrian authorities to use chemical weapons to fight against external terrorist threats and calls on President Bashar al-Assad to strictly adhere to its obligations under the Geneva protocol about the non-use of chemical weapons;

12. Strongly supports the work of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic which aims at investigating all violations of international human rights and humanitarian law committed in Syria so as to ensure that those responsible are held to account and calls on EU Member States during the 21st session of the UNHRC to grant that the Commission can continue its work with adequate reinforcement if needed;

13. 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 Member States, the government and parliament of the People's Republic of China, the government and parliament of Iraq, the government and parliament of Jordan, the

government and parliament of Lebanon, the government and parliament of Russia, the government and parliament of Turkey, the President and Congress of the United States, the Secretary-General of the UN, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, and the government and parliament of Syria;

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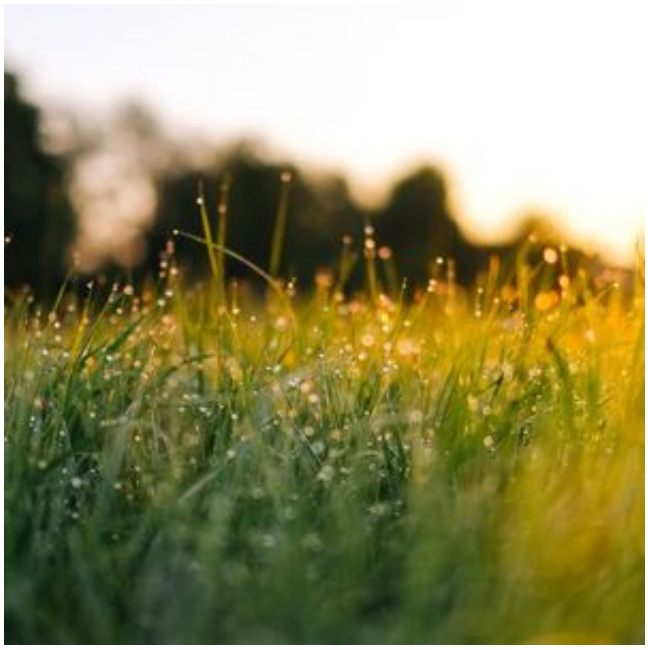
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