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VERTS / ALE

Proposition for an European Parliament resolution on the situation in Lebanon

- Député européen (Verts, France) - Grandes batailles - Moyen-Orient -



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The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Lebanon with regard, in particular, to the one of 10 March 2005,**
- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Middle East and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with regard, in particular, to the one of 1st June 2006,**
- having regard to its resolution on the European Neighbourhood Policy of 19 January 2006,**
- having regard to its resolution on the Barcelona Process revisited of 27 October 2005,**
- having regard to the Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean and the Middle East, which the European Council endorsed on 18 June 2004,**
- having regard to the Council Conclusions of the Extraordinary General Affairs and External Relations Council meetings of 1 August and 25 August 2006,**
- having regard to the Special Session Resolution S-2/1 of the UN Human Rights Council of 11 August 2006,**
- having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,**

A. deeply shocked by the massive airstrike campaign on Lebanon started by Israel on 12 July 2006, which was followed by a ground offensive at a later stage, in response to an incursion of Hitzbollah militias that killed three IDF soldiers and kidnapped two,

B. extremely concerned at the high number of death and casualties of innocent civilians and the widespread destruction of cities, villages and infrastructures in Lebanon,

C. extremely concerned at the victims and the damages caused by the rockets launched by the Hitzbollah militias in the territory of Israel,

D. pointing out that during the Lebanese crisis Israel has stepped up its policy of targeted assassinations in the Occupied Territories killing in this period more than 200 people most of which were innocent civilians,

E. emphasizing that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is to be regarded as the root cause of the instability in the region,

F. underlining that the international community is once again confronted with the failure of a prevention policy due also to the ineffectiveness of the UN to enforce the UN Security Council resolutions with regard, in particular, to UNSC 1559, as well as all as the other UNSC resolutions dealing with the Middle East,

G. pointing out that the reluctance of some Member States to take a strong position in the beginning of the crisis has prevented the Council from responding quickly and effectively thus showing once again the shortfalls of the EU common foreign policy,

H. stressing that the humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Territories is aggravating in spite of the Temporary Interim Mechanism (TIM) set up by the International Community in order to continue the assistance to the Palestinian population,

I. pointing out that Israel is still illegally withholding the payment of the tax and customs revenues to the Palestinian Authority and that the Rafah crossing point has been sealed from 25 June to 25 August,

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J. whereas besides the material destruction and the humanitarian catastrophe the region is now boiling with anger, despair, resentment and frustration driving even more old and young people towards radical movements,

K. stressing that the enemies of peace on both sides are now much stronger making dialogue much more difficult and pointing out that there is the concrete fear of a new arms' race in the region which must be immediately halted,

1. Takes the view that there is no military solution to the problems of the Middle East; in its high-scale and disproportionate attack on Lebanon, Israel has failed to achieve its declared objectives namely the release of the two IDF soldiers and the dismantlement of Hitzbollah;

2. Condemns the abusive and deliberately indiscriminate use of force on the part of Israel, in particular the bombing of civilian areas, the use of illegal weapons, the widespread destruction of civil infrastructure and the wide pollution of coastal areas;

3. Condemns the indiscriminate rocket attacks by Hitzbollah on Israel territory and civilian areas and its destruction of life, property and environment;

4. Welcomes the decision by the Lebanese government to deploy its forces in South Lebanon and the Israeli army's agreement to withdraw behind the Blue Line as foreseen by UNSC 1701; welcomes as well the strong support of the Lebanese government for an enhanced role of UNIFIL;

5. Calls upon both sides - Hitzbollah and Israel - to respect fully the US-France brokered UN cessation of hostilities (UNSCR 1701) which came into effect on 14 August which has largely been observed so far, and to put a definitive end to the attacks against civilians with a view to deescalating the situation and pave the way for a lasting ceasefire;

6. Emphasizes that there is the concrete fear of a new arms' race in the region which must be immediately halted; calls, in this regard, on the countries of the region as well as on the Lebanese army to stop arms' supplies to Hitzbollah and calls as well on Member Countries to strictly respect the Code of Conduct on Arms Export as regards all the deliveries of weapons to the region;

7. Welcomes the Council's determination at a later stage to put an end to hostilities and reach a ceasefire and to the decisive contribution of European peace-keeping forces to UNIFIL which is going to be bolstered from its current level of 1,990 soldiers to 15,000; regrets, nevertheless, the unpreparedness of the EU to deploy a real integrated European force under the UN mandate which could have sped up the operations;

8. Supports the mandate given to UNIFIL and calls on EU Member States to provide the necessary troops and other logistical support so as to ensure the success of this mission; reiterates its support for the sending of a strong international stabilisation force under UN supervision and calls on the Council to take concrete action; is of the opinion that the international stabilisation force should be also extended to the northern part of Israel and the Occupied Territories;

9. Is of the opinion, furthermore, that a strong contingent of Arab and Islamic countries is necessary for the full success of the operation;

10. Stresses nevertheless the importance of clearly and adequately defining the mandate, the structure and the competences of UNIFIL, if necessary to be agreed under a new UN Security Council Resolution which should take into account the lessons learnt from previous UN peacekeeping engagements, notably in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

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11. Points out that strong, quick and effective efforts are needed to rebuild Lebanon both physically and politically; welcomes, in this regard, the conclusions of the Stockholm Conference for Lebanon's Early Recovery held on 31 August in which donors countries pledged 940 million US dollars to rebuild the country with 120 million euros in humanitarian aid coming from the Commission and the Member States;
12. Points out that according to the first estimates the Lebanese government the cost of damage and loss amounts to 3.5 billion dollars; takes the view that only a quick and effective international action of reconstruction supported by a medium and long term engagement can contribute to preventing radical movements from benefiting from the present catastrophic situation; calls, in this regard, for a strict control on how the international aid is delivered;
13. Stresses the obligation under international humanitarian law to ensure access and safe passage for displaced persons, humanitarian workers and supplies; draws in this context attention to the special needs of the still very large and potentially vulnerable group of migrant workers from developing countries and their dependents;
14. Highlights, in this regard, the need for quick international action aimed at demining and ridding the territory of any other unexploded ordnances in order to make the return of displaced people safe;
15. Expects Israel to give a consistent and decisive financial contribution to the reconstruction of Lebanon; calls in this regard, on the EU Members of the EU Security Council to make every effort so as to activate the UN Compensation Commission which processed millions of claims - both large and small - resulting from Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990;
16. Calls on Israel to immediately put an end to the air and sea blockade of the country;
17. Urges the countries of the region to support and respect Lebanon's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity abstaining from interfering in its internal affairs and calls for the full implementation of the 1989 Taif accord;
18. Reiterates its call on the Commission to make every effort so as to support Lebanon democratic forces and civil society and strengthen a unified central government;
19. Is of the opinion that Hitzbollah must acknowledge and accept the Lebanese state exclusive right to possess armaments and use force and therefore must hand its armaments over to the Lebanese army in order to complete its transormation into a full-fledged political force capable to play an important role in a democratic Lebanon;
20. Calls, in this regard, on the Council to develop a programme of disarmament of Hitzbollah militias taking stock of the experience of the operation Concordia in Macedonia where a previous political agreement between both conflicting parties led to a voluntary disarmament;
21. Stresses that the current crisis brings the Middle East Peace Process back to the top of the international agenda; takes the view that after the failure of the US policy in the area a new leadership role for the EU in the Middle East demanding a peaceful resolution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be foreseen from now on: the European diplomatic and political role should now be commensurate to its peace-keeping and humanitarian action;
22. Calls, in this regard, on the Council to make every effort so as to reform the Quartet making it more effective and operational and bring back to tracks the Road Map;

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23. Calls on the Council to make every effort so as to convene a regional peace conference - like the Madrid Conference in 1991 - in order to find a comprehensive, lasting and viable solution to the problems in the area which include the right of Israel to live in secure and recognised borders and the right to a viable state for the Palestinians based on the Occupied Territories and deal in full with security and disarmament issues;
24. Takes the view that the structure of the Quartet should be reshaped and enlarged to the Arab League; considers the "Beirut Plan" of 2002, agreed by the Member Countries of the Arab League, and the Geneva Initiative as important contributions for the negotiations that should be duly taken into account;
25. Is of the opinion that the bloodshed in Gaza after the disengagement and the war in Lebanon prove once again the failure of the unilateral approach; points out that there is no alternative to a directly negotiated peace between all the parties concerned including Syria and Iran;
26. Calls upon Israel to permit the movement of people respecting the Agreement on Movement and Access, to stop destroying basic infrastructures of Gaza, to restart the payment of tax and customs revenues and to entable dialogue with the ANP;
27. Encourages and supports the talks between the Palestinian factions over a possible unity government paving the way to restarting direct assistance to the Palestinian Authority in compliance with EU demands;
28. Calls for the immediate release of members of the Palestinian Authority government and of the Legislative Council and in particular of its speaker Aziz Dweik; calls, at the same time, for the release of the Israeli soldiers still in the hands of Hitzzbollah militias and the one kidnapped in the Gaza Strip; supports and hopes that the ongoing informal negotiations can be successful with a view to solving as well the plight of the Lebanese prisoners detained in Israel;
29. Calls on the Council to make every effort so as to restart a genuine dialogue with Syria with a view to engaging this country in peace efforts; takes the view, in this regard, that the signing of the Association Agreement between the EC and Syria could represent a very important step forward in this direction enabling also the Council and the Commission to raise and tackle better the serious human rights violations taking place in this country;
30. Calls for an international comprehensive and high level inquiry in Lebanon and Israel with the mandate to investigate into reports of serious human rights violations, the plight of victims, the violation of humanitarian law, the killing of the four members of UNIFIL, the massacre of Qana and the use of chemical weapons, cluster bombs and bombs with depleted uranium and lay down the foundation for possible measures of reparation and accountability;
31. Takes the view, in this respect, that the conclusions of this inquiry could affect the association agreements with the countries of the area within the context of the Euromediterranean Partnership;
32. Points out the role that the Euromediterranean Partnership must play in bringing all the parties together and promote dialogue with regard, in particular, to its parliamentary assembly and the forum of civil society; supports the request to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Euromed Council of Foreign Ministers of the Barcelona Process as soon as possible;
33. Welcomes the early action of the European Commission's monitoring and information center planning to tackle the oil slick that has contaminated more than 50 km of Lebanese coast line and calls for an unhindered continued and effective technical and financial assistance to the cleaning up operations;

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34. Instructs its President to forward the present resolution to the Council and the Commission, to the UN Secretary General, to the governments and Parliaments of Lebanon and Israel, to the President and the Legislative Assembly of the Palestinian Authority and to the governments and the parliaments of the countries in the region.