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Session document

17.5.2006

B6-0281/2006 }
B6-0283/2006 }
B6-0286/2006 }
B6-0290/2006 }
B6-0293/2006 } RC1

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 115(5) of the Rules of Procedure, by

- Geoffrey Van Orden, Charles Tannock, Thomas Mann, Philip Bradbourn and Bernd Posselt, on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
- Pasqualina Napoletano, Robert Evans, Neena Gill, Emilio Menéndez del Valle and Elena Valenciano Martínez-Orozco, on behalf of the PSE Group
- Elizabeth Lynne, Sajjad Karim and Marios Matsakis, on behalf of the ALDE Group
- Jean Lambert, Raül Romeva i Rueda, Gérard Onesta and Frithjof Schmidt, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
- Eoin Ryan, on behalf of the UEN Group

replacing the motions by the following groups:

- Verts/ALE (B6-0281/2006)
- GUE/NGL (B6-0283/2006)
- PPE-DE (B6-0286/2006)
- ALDE (B6-0290/2006)
- PSE (B6-0293/2006)

on the situation in Sri Lanka

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PE 373.314v01-00}
PE 373.316v01-00}
PE 373.319v01-00}
PE 373.323v01-00}
PE 373.326v01-00} RC1

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European Parliament resolution on the situation in Sri Lanka

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the armed conflict which has torn Sri Lanka since 1983, taking over 60 000 lives and causing the displacement of more than 800 000 people,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions of 18 May 2000, 14 March 2002 and 20 November 2003 on Sri Lanka, and of 13 January 2005 on EU aid after the tsunami disaster,
 - having regard to the Oslo Declaration of December 2002, in which the Sri Lankan Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) agreed to try to find a federal solution within a united Sri Lanka,
 - having regard to the Tokyo Declaration on Reconstruction and Development of 10 June 2003, which linked donor support to progress in the peace process, insisting on compliance with the Ceasefire Agreement, participation of the Muslim minority in the talks, promotion and protection of human rights, gender equality and progress towards a final political settlement,
 - having regard to the support given by the EU and the wider international community in reply to the devastating tsunami of 26 December 2004,
 - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the conflict in Sri Lanka has killed over 60 000 people, displaced one million and held back the island's growth and economic development, resulting in a miserable situation for so many people across Sri Lanka, whose lives have been devastated by the tsunami and who now have to suffer from renewed violence,
- B. whereas there have been countless attacks in the Jaffna peninsula, Trincomalee and Batticaloa and the officially registered ceasefire breaches run into thousands, most of them committed by the LTTE,
- C. whereas tensions have been deliberately exacerbated by the attempted assassination of Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka, the Sri Lankan Army Commander, on 25 April 2006, the assassinations of Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar last August and Joseph Pararajasingha, MP, in December, and the attack on the Batticaloa district office of the SLMM on 13 January 2006 in a deliberate attempt to undermine the Ceasefire Agreement,
- D. whereas on 11 May the LTTE attacked a vessel carrying 710 unarmed members of the security forces on their way back after home leave, with members of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) on board and flying the SLMM flag, which was escorted by navy gun boats, sinking one of them and killing 18 of the crew members,

- E. whereas over 300 people have died in attacks and violence this year in Sri Lanka,
 - F. whereas international monitors say that the recent violence is the most serious threat to the 2002 ceasefire brokered by Norwegian mediators, previously weakened by a large number of reported ceasefire breaches, including armed ambushes, abductions, intimidation, killings, torture and recruitment of children as soldiers,
 - G. whereas after the first round held in Geneva in February, the peace talks have been suspended indefinitely after the LTTE pulled out again of a second round in April, jeopardising the opportunity for political progress,
 - H. whereas any restoration of the peace process should seek the involvement of a wide range of communities and political organisations in Sri Lanka, including Northern Muslim representatives,
 - I. whereas human rights organisations have not been able to effectively investigate human rights abuses, and the SLMM does not have the mandate independently to investigate these breaches,
1. Strongly welcomed the move by the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE to return to the negotiating table in February, and condemns, therefore, the LTTE's unilateral refusal to participate in the second round of negotiations in Geneva that were scheduled for April 2006;
 2. Urgently calls on the LTTE to resume peace negotiations with the Government of Sri Lanka without delay, to be prepared to decommission its weapons and to set the stage for a final political settlement of the conflict;
 3. Severely condemns the renewed campaign of attacks by the LTTE, the high level of human rights violations committed by both sides and the constant breaches of the ceasefire agreement;
 4. Deplores the gross violations of the Ceasefire Agreement by the LTTE through actions at sea, in particular the attack of 11 May on the Sri Lankan naval force, which resulted in many casualties and put SLMM monitors in grave danger;
 5. Calls on the parties to the Ceasefire Agreement to ensure the security of the SLMM which is an unarmed body invited by both the Government and the LTTE to monitor the Ceasefire Agreement, in order to allow the mission to fulfil its mandate, and commends the contributing countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, for their invaluable work;
 6. Calls on both the LTTE and the Government of Sri Lanka to refrain from further actions liable to jeopardise the peace process, and in particular attacks on civilians;
 7. Expresses its condemnation of the appalling abuse of children through the recruitment of child soldiers, which is a war crime, and calls on all rebel groups and notably the LTTE to

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stop this practice, to release those it holds and to make a declaration of principle not to recruit any children in the future; urges the Government of Sri Lanka to put into place legal measures to prevent and criminalise the practice;

8. Recognises that the LTTE does not represent all the Tamil peoples of Sri Lanka and calls on the LTTE to allow for political pluralism and alternate democratic voices in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka which would secure the interests of all peoples and communities;
9. Strongly condemns the particular repression against Tamil language press and Tamil organisations, and calls for a thorough investigation into the murders of Mayilvaganam Nimalarajan and Dharmaratnam Sivaram, as well as the two employees of the newspaper 'Uthayan';
10. Recognises that Sri Lanka's recent election as a member of the UN Human Rights Council places an obligation on the government to manifest its commitment to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights;
11. Calls on the Commission and the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure the reactivation of Sri Lanka's Human Rights Commission and stresses the need for an effective independent investigation into all alleged human rights violations by security forces or armed groups, bringing the perpetrators to justice in accordance with international fair trial standards, and insists that all parties should subscribe to comprehensive human rights agreements as a key element of future peace negotiations;
12. Urges both sides, as an immediate gesture of goodwill, to cease the use of anti-personnel landmines and to assist in their removal, and considers that, to this end, the Government of Sri Lanka should set an example by signing the Ottawa Convention and the LTTE should sign the Geneva Call 'Deed of Commitment';
13. Is worried at the fact that a deal to share international aid has still not been implemented, and believes that aid sent to Sri Lanka by the EU, and other international donors, in response to the tsunami must benefit the victims of that disaster without regard for their ethnic or religious denomination; but is concerned about the distribution and use of tsunami funds, which have not had the expected impact on the everyday lives of the victims or on Sri Lanka's recovery; notes that the political gridlock on the 'Post-Tsunami Operations Management Structure' has already delayed the release of a further € 50 million in aid, hindering reconstruction work in the North and East of Sri Lanka;
14. Deplores the fact that the demands of heavy defence costs have for many years diverted resources away from urgently needed investments in economic and social infrastructure in Sri Lanka;
15. Calls on the EU Member States to do everything in their capacity in order to stop all illegal attempts by the LTTE to uphold a system of forced taxation among sections of the Tamil community living in the European Union;

16. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, as part of this process, to follow the example of other countries and to freeze the assets of the LTTE-associated bank accounts, holdings, companies or undertakings in Member States of the European Union;
17. Recognises that the EU has declared that delegations from the LTTE will no longer be received in any of the EU Member States until further notice, and that the EU is actively considering the formal listing of the LTTE as a terrorist organisation;
18. Calls on the Council, the Commission and the Member States to remain committed to a fair and sustainable solution to the Sri Lankan conflict and reiterates its support for all the people of Sri Lanka and their President, Mr Mahinda Rajapakse, as they address together the challenges that lie ahead;
19. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the other members of the Co-Chairs Group (Norway, the USA and Japan), the UN Secretary-General, the governments of Switzerland, Sri Lanka and the other SAARC countries, and the LTTE.