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Committee on Foreign affairs

*The new “wars for land” in Africa, like in Darfur and Zimbabwe: in what measure should the EU take upon itself the African situation? What policies can it promote in order to protect the population, especially in the ex-colonial areas which have been suffering from political instability for decades, while respecting African sovereignty?*

The European Parliament,

1. Whereas land is a fundamental resource for every state because of its leading role in the development and balance of a country's economy; furthermore conscious that land is the basic source of support and sustenance for the population in countries where the industrial sector has, as yet, not properly developed, as is the case with the majority of African countries;
2. Considering that the name of “wars for land” is given to those conflicts aiming at controlling land and its distribution, and including a wide range of conditions that contribute to worsening the above mentioned situation of widespread social and political decay, as it is exemplified in the following cases:
  - conflicts between native ethnic groups, such as in Darfur, where an armed conflict, involving regular troops, pro-government Janjaweed militias (recruited among the nomadic Arab tribes of the region) and rebels (mostly sedentary land-tilling tribes), started in 2003, when the Arab militias first attacked the sedentary African populations to take possession of land;
  - difficult relationships between the African majority of inhabitants and the ex-colonists minority such as in Zimbabwe; here, president Mugabe tried to enact a proper land reform (Land Acquisition Act 1990) in order to expropriate ex-colonists' lands; initially supported by UK, which was meant to provide the expropriated farmers with financial compensations (according to “Lancaster House” agreement), as soon as English Government, in 1997, refused to keep on paying compensation to the farmers till lands would actually benefit the weaker social classes, thousands of Mugabe's supporters, from the War Veterans Association have occupied hundreds of white-owned farms; these supporters are accused of forcing farm owners to sign over their land and intimidating farm workers into withdrawing support for the main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change;
  - governments' connivance with armed bands/terrorist groups acting in the countries;
3. Considering that in the previous centuries only few colonists possessed the majority of exploitable land in African countries, with the following consequences:
  - A serious damage to those countries' economical growth and development;
  - Present difficulties in organising a fair redistribution among the people, in order to create an active and dynamic land-owning middle class, able to improve those countries' economy;
4. Considering the first causes of the “wars for land” to be underdevelopment, economic and political marginalisation of the population, the absence of the rule of law and the undemocratic nature of the present regimes;
5. Noting with deep concern that, in the whole African continent, the “wars for land” are a widespread phenomenon, involving a great deal of countries, such as Sudan, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Namibia, Ivory Coast and South Africa;
6. Deeply concerned about the situation in Darfur, where the conflict is going on despite the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement on 5 May 2006 in Abuja, Nigeria, causing the death of civilians (at least 400,000 in the past three years), sexual violence against women, torture, displacement of the population and looting;
7. Fully aware of the fact that the current situation in most of the above mentioned countries, affected by armed conflicts or social unrest, does not guarantee people with the exercise of basic human rights, such as the right to live, to personal integrity, to freedom, to safety;
8. Deeply convinced that the EU has the moral duty to act firmly for the people's own good, in order to ensure the exercise of basic human rights where they are outright violated;
9. Considering that EU, as a communitarian body, has no responsibility over the conduct of its individual Member States before they joint it; therefore, EU is not at all involved in those issues

related to the past of its singular Member States as former colonial powers; thus it has no duty to intervene to make up for the faults its Member States committed during their colonial rule;

10. Whereas there is no actual coordination and cohesion among each Member State's policies on the defence of human rights and effective support to the victims of abuses;
  11. Considering that the effectiveness of both governmental and non-governmental humanitarian projects suffers greatly of the waste of resources and funds and of the lack of mutual coordination;
  12. Considering that the AU deployment of a 7000 people peace keeping force in Darfur (from 2005 to December 2006) has failed due to a lack in funds and personnel;
  13. Bearing in mind that the UN "Responsibility to Protect" doctrine provides that where "national authorities manifestly fail to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity", other countries and NGOs have a responsibility to provide the protection needed;
  14. Taking note of past and present interferences of international powers in the home and economic affairs of many African countries, as is the case of USA and URSS pressures in the previous decades or of economic speculations of other countries in these days (such as China and Russia); further deploring the drawbacks of such interference for African countries, among which:
    - Destabilization of economic balance;
    - Chance of unfair management of home affairs and political instability (due, for instance, to the tendency of foreign powers of encouraging the government of conniving parties);
  15. Whereas the UN security Council has authorized the use of sanctions under UNSC resolution 1591 against those countries impeding peace process and committing violations of international law;
  16. Considering that the governments of the above mentioned countries do not cooperate with the measures taken by the UN and the International Community, and do not show any commitment to the solution of the current problems in their own countries;
  17. Considering that the governments of the above mentioned countries do not respect human rights, which are a fundamental part of the UN Chart, the UN itself can not take the responsibility to respect their sovereignty;
- A* Asserts that the Governments of the countries, where the struggle for land has degenerated into armed conflicts and abuses against the populations, have failed in their "Responsibility to Protect" their people and therefore have to accept the International Community intervention, which is aimed at promoting peace and the exercise of Human Rights;
- B* Calls on the UN to act in compliance with its "Responsibility to Protect" and to make every possible effort to provide effective protection for the populations involved, basing its action on the failure or unwillingness of the Governments of the African countries to protect their people from war crimes and crimes against humanity, and also their failure to provide for humanitarian assistance to the population;
- C* Confirms its unconditional support of any UN decision aimed at re-establishing peace among the parties of the current conflicts in the above mentioned regions;
- D* Calls on the International Community to overcome any economic interest in the African countries that would hinder the UN line of action, and turn the fostering of human rights into their first objective at international level;
- E* Encourages each Member State to favour commercial partnership with small and medium-sized companies of the above mentioned countries rather than with important land owners and influent private and state industries, in order to create a more balanced and active economy where there are situations of economic hegemony and government monopoly (as is the case of the countries affected by the wars for land);
- F* Further invites China to use its significant leverage in Darfur to work towards peace and to hold the Government of Sudan to its commitments to the UN decisions, including a peaceful acceptance of the UN peace keeping force;
- G* Calls on the Arab League, China and Russia to positively contribute to UN efforts and not to support the governments of the countries in question, due to their unfair conduct against the populations; thus requests to China and Russia to cease trading in weapons with the above mentioned countries

and to cease blocking decisions on targeted sanctions against the governments in the UN Security Council;

- H* Urges the International Community to enforce a weapons embargo against those countries where armed conflicts are going on despite the ceasefire requested by the UNSC;
- I* Calls on the UN to increase and improve the monitoring of violations of basic human rights through proper inspections; on the other hand, invites the African Countries to cooperate with such measures in the observance of the UN's "Responsibility to Protect";
- J* Urges each Member State to act in line with a common and cohesive policy on humanitarian assistance and use of EU's forces in those regions affected by armed conflicts;
- K* Requests the deployment, according to the European Security and Defence Policy, of a joint EU-AU peacekeeping force in the above mentioned countries; reminds that a joint action would more likely succeed in such an initiative, allowing EU and AU to coordinate their efforts with respect to organizations, funding and equipment, otherwise missing if the two of them acted on their own (as it happened in the AMIS, where the lack of means compromised the success of the action);
- L* Proposes to take all necessary action to help fulfil the above mentioned joint action; thus requests that the EIDHR supports the EU-AU mission in the carrying out of peacekeeping interventions, both providing it with funding and cooperating with the latter in the planning of the contingents deployment;
- M* Further calls on the EIDHR to more effectively support all the NGOs acting in the above mentioned countries in order to enable them to act directly on the territory to achieve the exercise of basic human rights;
- N* Proposes the creation of a specific body aimed at monitoring and keeping a detailed report over the general prospect of both non-governmental and governmental humanitarian measures, in order to gain better clearness and transparency over the general situation in those countries (for example, African countries affected by wars for land) where such measures are needed, so that it will be possible to achieve better cohesion and effective coordination among all humanitarian projects;
- O* Proposes that EU and other international organizations applies sanctions that target any side (including the government) of the countries that violate human rights, attack civilians, peacekeepers or humanitarian operations and to take all necessary actions to help end impunity through targeted economic sanctions, including travel bans and asset freezes as the EU has done in the past with other countries (Ivory Coast and Zimbabwe);
- P* O. bis Further recommends that the sanctions applied must not turn against the populations of the countries in question in any way;
- Q* Proposes that, in case of non cooperation by the governments of the above mentioned countries and consequential ineffectiveness of UN actions, the UN exceptionally implements the International Trusteeship System in the countries affected by Wars for land, in order to encourage respect of human rights and promote democracy, political stability and social and economic advancement;
- R* Exhorts the institutions and the other EU Member States to do what is in their possibilities, undertaking political and diplomatic initiatives in order to guarantee the success of this resolution, within the present General Assembly.