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Plenary sitting

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<TitreType>MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION</TitreType>

<TitreSuite>to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy</TitreSuite>

<TitreRecueil>pursuant to Rule 123(2) of the Rules of Procedure</TitreRecueil>

<Titre>on the situation in Yemen</Titre>

<DocRef>(2017/2849(RSP))</DocRef>

<RepeatBlock-By><Depute>Ángela Vallina, Javier Couso Permuy, Paloma López Bermejo, Patrick Le Hyaric, Merja Kyllönen, Sabine Lösing, Neoklis Sylikiotis, Takis Hadjigeorgiou, Sofia Sakorafa, Marina Albiol Guzmán, Jiří Maštálka, Kateřina Konečná, Dimitrios Papadimoulis, Maria Lidia Senra Rodríguez, João Pimenta Lopes</Depute>

<Commission>{GUE/NGL}on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group</Commission>

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B8‑0653/2017

European Parliament resolution on the situation in Yemen

(2017/2849(RSP))

*The European Parliament*,

– having regard to the statements on Yemen and its humanitarian situation made by the Spokesperson of Secretary-General of the United Nations, by the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, and by the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock,

– having regard to the Council conclusions on Yemen of 16 November 2015 and 3 April 2017 and to the Council Conclusions of 17 July 2017 on addressing the risk of famine;

– having regard to the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on Yemen, and to that of the Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides, on the humanitarian situation in Yemen of 11 November 2017,

– having regard to the Integrated Response Plan: Yemen Cholera Outbreak by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), updated on 23 May 2017, and to its Humanitarian Response Plan for Yemen for January-December 2017,

– having regard to the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, in particular those of 14 April 2015 (S/RES/2216), 24 February 2016 (S/RES/2266) and 23 February 2017 (S/RES/2342),

– having regard to its previous resolutions on Yemen, in particular those of 9 July 2015[[1]](#footnote-1), of 25 February 2016[[2]](#footnote-2) and of 15 June 2017[[3]](#footnote-3),

– having regard to its resolution of 27 February 2014 on the use of armed drones[[4]](#footnote-4),

– having regard to the Charter of the United Nations and to the principles of international humanitarian law,

– having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the long-standing confrontation between the Houthis and the Yemeni Government has continued for more than two and a half years, leading the country to a humanitarian crisis that is currently the worst in the world; whereas there is widespread starvation and a fast-spreading cholera outbreak on an enormous scale with over 925 000 suspected cholera cases and more than 2 200 associated deaths;

B. whereas the Saudi Arabia led-coalition – backed by the United States and comprising the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, Morocco and Sudan –has been the main cause of death of Yemeni civilians since the start of an airstrike campaign on 26 March 2015 aimed at restoring President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi to power; whereas this coalition has committed grave violations, including strikes on homes, markets, hospitals and schools, that have resulted in many thousands of civilian deaths, mostly of women and children;

C. whereas, under the pretext of a ballistic missile allegedly being fired by the Houthis and intercepted by Saudi Arabia on its way to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia has re-imposed a near-total blockade, closing Yemen’s land, sea and air borders on 6 November 2017; whereas the recent reopening of the port of the city of Aden is clearly insufficient; whereas the coalition’s blockade of fuel and the targeting of civilian infrastructure are in violation of international humanitarian law;

D. whereas Saudi Arabia and the US President have both accused Iran of being responsible for firing the ballistic missile; whereas Iran has denied this accusation and the Houthis have insisted that they produced the missile by themselves in Yemen;

E. whereas over 50 000 civilians have been killed, injured or maimed during the conflict; whereas the UN is urgently calling on the authorities and the various factions to allow sustained access to the besieged cities, which would allow it to deliver help to people in need, as the war in Yemen has been ranked in the most severe category of humanitarian crises; whereas thousands of refugees have managed to flee to neighbouring countries;

F. whereas Yemen is now at the centre of the world’s largest food security crisis, with around 80 % of the Yemeni population – approximately 21 million people – in urgent need of some form of humanitarian aid that would alleviate their desperate need for food, medicines and fuel;

G. whereas malnutrition and cholera are interconnected; whereas 17 million people in Yemen are food insecure, including 7 million facing famine, 3.3 million who are acutely malnourished and 462 000 children in the grip of severe acute malnutrition;

H. whereas extensive violations by the Ansar Allah armed group, including the use of landmines, have been reported; whereas there have also been instances of extrajudicial executions by the forces of President Hadi and allied parties and armed groups; whereas Yemeni parties to the conflict are responsible for the indiscriminate shelling of civilians and civilian facilities, the denial of humanitarian access, arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances and torture;

I. whereas the country is facing a humanitarian catastrophe, including a risk of famine, aggravated by the cholera outbreak; whereas air strikes, shelling and violence continue to force Yemeni families from their homes, leading to millions of internally displaced people (IDPs); whereas over 8 million people have lost reliable and safe access to drinking water as most of the water network has been destroyed by fighting; whereas most Yemenis lack adequate access to health care assistance;

J. whereas, according to Save the Children, 130 children die in Yemen every day; whereas at least 1.8 million children have had to drop out of school, in addition to the 1.6 million who were not in school before the conflict began;

K. whereas women in Yemen have traditionally been highly vulnerable to abuses such as child marriage and violence, as there is no legal minimum age of consent in the country; whereas women have less access than men to medical care, property ownership, education and training; whereas their situation has been worsened by the conflict, and an estimated 2.6 million women and girls are at risk of gender-based violence; whereas the number of child marriages has increased significantly in the past two years; whereas around 30 % of displaced households are headed by women; whereas medicines for many chronic diseases are no longer available, and whereas Yemen has one of the highest maternal death rates; whereas malnourished, pregnant and lactating women are more likely to contract cholera and have a higher risk of bleeding, adding considerably to the risk of complications and death during childbirth;

L. whereas around 280 000 refugees, mainly from Somalia, are in Yemen, the only country in the Arab Peninsula which is a signatory to the Refugee Convention and the Protocol; whereas these refugees are also in need of protection as a result of the worsening of the conflict; whereas some 30 600 Somalis have reportedly already returned to Somalia, and the UNHCR has established Return Help Desks;

M. whereas the conflict and the security vacuum it has caused have led to the dangerous expansion of extremist groups in the country; whereas Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula has consolidated its presence and Da’esh has continued its campaign of attacks and assassinations;

N. whereas UN-sponsored talks have been frozen and a political solution to the conflict seems far from being achieved;

O. whereas Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the world; whereas before the start of the war, half of Yemenis already lived below the poverty line, two-thirds of young people were unemployed and basic social services were on the verge of collapse;

P. whereas the conflict has been depicted as one between Shias and Sunnis in an attempt to obscure the real geopolitical reasons behind it; whereas Saudi Arabia is accusing the Houthis of being backed by Iran and regards them as a threat to Saudi security; whereas the complexity of the conflict in Yemen has some of the elements of a proxy war; whereas this is clear from the strong Al-Qaeda presence, the separatist movements and Zaidi Shia rebels in the north, as well as battles between the Houthis and armed groups in the south; whereas the conflict has fostered the expansion of Da’esh-affiliated groups in the country;

Q. whereas the EU and the UN have imposed an arms embargo on Yemen, and the EU has imposed targeted sanctions against Houthi leaders; whereas, at the same time, 17 EU Member States, including the United Kingdom, Spain, France, Italy and Germany, continue to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia; whereas the UK, France and Spain, in particular, have significantly increased their supply of weapons to actors involved in the conflict;

R. whereas the US holds the al-Annad military air base in Yemen, near the southern city of al-Houta, where Americans have commanded drone strikes against suspected members of the local Al-Qaeda branch; whereas the US drone strikes and the extrajudicial killings carried out in Yemen since 2002 have contributed to the destabilisation of the situation in the country; whereas, according to reports on Yemen issued by the UN’s Office of the High Commissioner For Human Rights (OHCHR), drone strikes have killed more civilians than alleged terrorists/Al-Qaeda members;

S. whereas there has been a dramatic increase in lethal drone operations in Yemen since the Trump Administration took office, with a massive increase of 231 per cent since 2016 and at least 115 confirmed strikes this year, including two ground raids; whereas there is evidence that EU Member States such as the UK, Italy and Germany are providing both direct and indirect support for such lethal operations by providing intelligence and other operational support;

T. whereas the geographical location of Yemen at the mouth of the Red Sea, which leads to the Suez Canal and opens on to the Gulf of Aden, has strategic importance linked to significant maritime routes and energy resources;

1. Is deeply concerned about the escalation of the conflict in Yemen, which has led to the current humanitarian crisis, with the situation becoming even more dramatic with the restoration of the full blockade by Saudi Arabia;

2. Condemns the use of violence against civilians by any party to the conflict or by terrorists or other armed groups, as such acts have led the country into a severe humanitarian crisis and resulted in thousands of civilians being wounded and killed, and in several million displaced persons; expresses its deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims;

3. Condemns the indiscriminate military strikes carried out by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen which continue to be the leading cause of civilian deaths; condemns, furthermore, the blockade re-imposed by Saudi Arabia on Yemen and urges for it to be completely lifted; calls on Saudi Arabia and its coalition to ensure that all ports and land routes remain open in order to allow urgent humanitarian relief for the Yemeni population;

4. Reiterates its full support for the efforts of the UN and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; is convinced that there can only be a political solution to the conflict in Yemen; calls, therefore, on all parties in Yemen to agree as a matter of urgency to a cessation of hostilities, to be monitored by the United Nations as a first step towards the resumption of peace talks leading to Yemeni-led inclusive political negotiations, with a view to restoring peace in the country;

5. Reminds all parties, especially Saudi Arabia and its coalition, of their responsibility to ensure compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law, which means protecting civilians, refraining from targeting civilian infrastructure, and providing safe and unimpeded access to the country for humanitarian organisations;

6. Is convinced that Saudi intervention is aimed at reinforcing its control in the region, and that this will only bring more suffering to the Yemeni people and deeper divisions between the peoples in the Middle East; is concerned about the increasing tension in the region exacerbated by the unilateral measures taken by Saudi Arabia towards other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council such as Qatar;

7. Calls on the parties to the conflict to take all necessary steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against the civilian population, including sexual and gender-based violence; strongly condemns the violations of the rights of the child; expresses grave concern over reports of the use of child soldiers by Houthi, Ansar Al-Sharia and government forces, and at children’s limited access to basic health care and education; calls for those responsible for violations and abuses of human rights law, or violations of international humanitarian law, to be held accountable for their actions;

8. Strongly criticises the intensive arms trade of Member States with various countries in the region, as in the cases of the UK, Spain, France and Germany; calls for an immediate suspension of arms transfers and military support to Saudi Arabia and to its coalition partners; reiterates its call on the Council to impose an EU arms embargo against Saudi Arabia given the serious allegations of breaches of international humanitarian law by Saudi Arabia in Yemen and the fact that the continued licensing of weapon sales to Saudi Arabia would therefore be in breach of Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP of 8 December 2008[[5]](#footnote-5);

9. Deplores the fact that no independent international investigation has been initiated into the coalition airstrike on a crowded funeral ceremony in Sana’a on 8 October 2016, which, according to the report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen of 27 January 2017, killed 132 people and wounded 695;

10. Expresses its concern over the ability of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and Da’esh to benefit from the deterioration of the political and security situation in Yemen; recalls that all acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, and regardless of when, where and by whom they are committed;

11. Is convinced that any long-term solution should address the underlying causes of poverty and instability in the country and also fulfil the legitimate demands and aspirations of the Yemeni people; reaffirms its support for any peaceful political effort to protect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen;

12. Deeply regrets the lack of attention paid in the past two and a half years by the international community and mass media to the conflict that has motivated the current humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen;

13. Rejects any foreign military intervention in the country, be it Saudi or Iranian, Arab or Western; is very concerned at the escalation of tensions in the region, which has been compounded by statements by President Trump on Iran’s involvement; underlines that the war in Yemen is not simply a conflict between Shias and Sunnis; denounces the instrumentalisation of religious differences, in particular by Saudi Arabia, to instigate political crises and sectarian wars;

14. Condemns the EU’s connivance and complicity with dictatorships in the region; is highly critical of the role played by the various Western interventions of recent years in exacerbating conflicts in the area; states that there can be no military solution to the conflicts in the region; rejects the use of the notion of ‘responsibility to protect’, also used as a pretext by different parties to the conflict in Yemen, as it violates international law and does not offer an adequate legal basis for justifying the unilateral use of force;

15. Calls on the international community, and in particular on Member States such as the UK, France, Spain and Germany, to end arms transfers to all warring parties in the country and, therefore, to take the necessary measures to prevent their direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer to, or for the benefit of, designated individuals and entities and those acting on their behalf or at their direction in Yemen, in line with the UN Arms Embargo on Yemen, as defined in paragraph 14 of UNSC resolution 2216 (2015);

16. Condemns the increasing use of drones for extraterritorial operations by the US under the Obama Administration and the further increase under the Trump Administration; firmly opposes the use of drones in extrajudicial and extraterritorial killings; demands a ban on the use of drones for this purpose pursuant to its aforementioned resolution of 27 February 2014 on the use of armed drones, which in paragraph 2(a) and (b) calls on the Vice-President / High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Member States and the Council to ‘oppose and ban the practice of extrajudicial targeted killings’ and to ‘ensure that the Member States, in conformity with their legal obligations, do not perpetrate unlawful targeted killings or facilitate such killings by other states’;

17. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government of Yemen, and the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the UN General Assembly.

1. Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2015)0270. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2016)0066. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2017)0273. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2014)0172. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. OJ L 335, 13.12.2008, p. 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)