Timor-Leste

P6_TA(2008)0070

European Parliament resolution of 21 February 2008 on Timor-Leste

(2009/C 184 E/16)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to its previous resolutions on Timor-Leste,

— having regard to the briefing to the Security Council (5432nd meeting) by the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Timor-Leste,

— having regard to the report of its delegation to observe the legislative elections in the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste from 27 June to 2 July 2007, led by Ana Gomes,

— having regard to the statement made by the Portuguese Presidency on behalf of the European Union on 5 July 2007 on the legislative elections in Timor-Leste,

— having regard to the UN Security Council statement of 11 February 2008 condemning the attack on Timor-Leste President José Ramos-Horta,

— having regard to the statement on 11 February 2008 of Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, condemning the assassination attempts in Timor-Leste,

— having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the dismissal in April 2006 of nearly 600 soldiers in Timor-Leste, as a reaction to their grievances, led to a very serious security crisis in the country, characterised by armed confrontation (between the armed forces and the dismissed troops and also with police forces), police disruption, riots and widespread gang violence, as a result of which dozens of people were killed, many more were wounded and 150,000 people fled their homes, half of them remaining displaced in camps,

B. whereas the security crisis also entailed the downfall of the government led by Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri in June 2006, and the appointment of a transitional government led by José Ramos-Horta,

C. whereas former Prime Minister and Nobel Prize laureate José Ramos-Horta was elected President of Timor-Leste on 9 May 2007 and, following the parliamentary elections of 30 June 2007, former President Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão became Prime Minister of the country on 6 August 2007, raising hopes for the definitive stabilisation of the country and due respect for democratic institutions,

D. whereas the political instability in Timor-Leste continued, despite the free and peaceful presidential and parliamentary elections and a stronger engagement by the international community under the auspices of the United Nations, responding to appeals from the Timor-Leste authorities,

E. whereas much of that instability was due to the defiance of the rule of law by the leadership of the disaffected soldiers taken by fugitive ex-Major Alfredo Reinado, who had broken out of prison in 2006 and served as an inspiration to violent youth gangs in the capital,

F. whereas, on 11 February 2008, those rebel groups shot and seriously wounded President Ramos-Horta, who is in a critical condition in an Australian hospital, and opened fire on Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão in separate but coordinated attacks against the leadership of the country and state institutions,

G. whereas a state of emergency has been declared by the Parliament of Timor-Leste and remains in place; whereas the government has requested reinforcements for the 1,600 international peacekeepers already deployed in Timor-Leste,
H. whereas the violent attacks against the state institutions and democratically elected leaders of Timor-Leste are a sequel of the April 2006 crisis, making it evident that, despite the efforts of national authorities, the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and international forces, effective national security and the rule of law are not yet functioning in Timor-Leste,

I. whereas qualified observers have drawn attention to the lack of any prompt or adequate response from the UN International Police or other international forces to the 11 February 2008 attacks, with the exception of the effective intervention of the Portuguese Republican National Guard, once it was called to act,

J. whereas the attacks occurred after President Ramos-Horta had personally engaged in trying to find a negotiated solution with the rebels; whereas the exact sequence of events still remains unclear, and the roles of the national and international security forces leave many questions unanswered,

K. whereas the poor state of the Timor-Leste economy, despite the country’s oil revenues, with 40 % of the population living below the poverty line and 60 % aged 18 and under, massive unemployment of around 80 %, and high illiteracy rates, is creating very unstable social conditions and increasing the potential for civil unrest,

L. whereas both the European Union and the United Nations are publicly committed to supporting independence, democracy and the rule of law in Timor-Leste, which requires the consolidation of state institutions, good governance, the proper use of state funds to address the fight against poverty and unemployment and promote development and social justice, and exemplary behaviour on the part of Timor-Leste’s neighbours,

M. whereas Timor-Leste is a full member of the ACP group of States and the European Union has, therefore, a particular responsibility to contribute to consolidating its democratic governance, by assisting its institutions in the major effort of capacity building required,

N. whereas account should be taken of the inalienable sovereign rights of the people of Timor-Leste, in particular over their natural resources,

1. Condemns vehemently the attempted assassination of President Ramos-Horta and wishes him a full recovery and a quick return to the leadership of the country;

2. Condemns vehemently the simultaneous attack against Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão, who fortunately escaped unhurt, and hopes that the Government, together with the President and Parliament of Timor-Leste, will be able to overcome these grave threats to the stability of Timor-Leste and cooperate to ensure respect for law and order and the normal functioning of democratic institutions, in accordance with the constitution;

3. Urges all parties in Timor-Leste to refrain from violence, engage in dialogue and participate in the democratic process within the legal and constitutional framework, thus contributing to restoring social and political stability;

4. Expresses its concern at the message of impunity and disrespect for the rule of law which may have been conveyed, in an effort to promote national reconciliation, by the ambiguous attitude of the authorities of Timor-Leste, UNMIT and international security forces towards people who are summoned to face justice;

5. Condemns anyone in Timor-Leste who will try to take advantage of the fragile situation following the attacks on 11 February 2008 and urges all parties to respect and cooperate fully with the political bodies that emerged from the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2007;

6. Calls for a thorough inquiry within the constitutional and legal framework of Timor-Leste, with the necessary international cooperation and support, aimed at clarifying every detail of the apparent attempted coup d’État and the failure of the security system in the country to bring to justice the perpetrators of such attacks; welcomes the opening of a joint investigation into the attacks by the United Nations and the Timor-Leste police;
7. Urges the main political forces in Timor-Leste, both in power and in opposition, to engage in a cross-party effort to reach a national understanding as a matter of urgency on core issues of the functioning of the state, such as the role of the armed forces, the police and the reinforcement of the judiciary system; offers its support for such efforts among the parliamentary parties of Timor-Leste;

8. Recalls that the role of the international community, and in particular the United Nations and its Security Council, is of vital importance to the process of consolidating the state of Timor-Leste and its independence and sovereignty, as well as to strengthening democracy in that young nation;

9. Stresses the importance of the conduct of the countries neighbouring Timor-Leste in respecting and favouring the stability of the society of Timor-Leste and the consolidation of its national democratic institutions; acknowledges the positive attitude of Indonesia since the recognition of the independence of Timor-Leste and the decisions of Australia and others to help;

10. Calls on the Council and the Commission to urge the Timor-Leste authorities and UNMIT to prohibit, disband and disarm any paramilitary groups, armed gangs and armed civilians, and to raise European concerns over security capacity and respect for the rule of law with the United Nations and the Government of Timor-Leste at all official meetings, and at the highest level;

11. Calls on the international institutions to provide broader support to meet the need for Timor-Leste to reform of its fragile and politicised security sector, as is essential for a fully functioning democratic and secure State, through a wide consultation process and a systematic and comprehensive approach, as recommended by UN Security Council Resolution 1704(2006) and subsequent UN reports; calls on the Government of Timor-Leste to give high priority to that task; invites the Government of Timor-Leste to take advantage of the expertise in the UN Security Sector Support Unit to conduct national consultations on security sector reform; calls on the Council, the Commission and other international donors to establish a mechanism by which to improve the coordination of assistance to the security sector; calls on UNMIT to give the Security Sector Support Unit the resources and staff to assist the consultation process and comprehensive review;

12. Recommends that the decisions and orders of tribunals be promptly respected and fully enforced by the authorities of Timor-Leste, with the support, whenever necessary, of the international forces in the country;

13. Calls on the state institutions of Timor-Leste and UNMIT to uphold the rule of law, combat impunity of crimes and ensure compliance with international human rights standards by all in Timor-Leste, especially the police and armed forces;

14. Reaffirms its recognition of Timor-Leste’s need for political, technical and financial support in building the infrastructure and administrative structures which are essential to resume the implementation of its development plan, and in invigorating the economy of Timor-Leste and the promotion of employment; calls for continued support by the international community to alleviate poverty in Timor-Leste and provide assistance to rebuild the physical and administrative structures necessary for its economic development;

15. Calls on the European Union and the international community, and in particular neighbouring and ASEAN countries, to maintain and step up the support required to consolidate democracy and a democratic culture in Timor-Leste, focusing on multi-party culture, freedom of expression and on institution-building — namely the parliament, the government, the judiciary, security, defence and law enforcement agencies — and to assist in the urgent extension of media coverage to the whole country, as well as to strengthen the education and health networks and infrastructure in housing, sanitation and water supply;

16. Calls on the Commission to speed up and conclude the installation of a fully functioning delegation in Dili;
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17. Recommends sending an ad hoc parliamentary delegation to Timor-Leste to reassess the political situation, express solidarity to democratic forces and institutions and renew Parliament's offer of assistance to the democratic functioning of the Parliament of Timor-Leste;

18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the President, Government and Parliament of Timor-Leste, the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the governments of the ACP countries, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the governments of Australia and Indonesia, the Secretary-General and the Secretariat of ASEAN, the UN Secretary-General, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Timor-Leste and the UN Security Council.

Belarus

P6_TA(2008)0071

European Parliament resolution of 21 February 2008 on Belarus

(2009/C 184 E/17)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Belarus, in particular to its resolution of 6 April 2006 on the situation in Belarus after the presidential elections of 19 March 2006 (1),

— having regard to the Commission's declaration of 21 November 2006 on the European Union's readiness to renew its relationship with Belarus and its people within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP),

— having regard to its Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought, which was awarded to the Belarusian Association of Journalists on 14 December 2004 and to Aleksander Milinkevich on 13 December 2006,

— having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas it has repeatedly condemned the failed presidential, parliamentary and local elections in Belarus,

B. whereas it has called on the Council and the Commission to make proposals to put further pressure on Lukashenko's regime within international organisations and has demanded that a complete package of specific, targeted sanctions — severely punishing the perpetrators of oppression without adding to the suffering of the citizens of Belarus — be put forward,

C. whereas it has particularly condemned the fact that local democracy, which is the cornerstone of any democratic governance and which expresses the will of ordinary people to fulfil their genuine hopes and expectations, has been disregarded and neglected in Belarus,

D. whereas the continuous political and administrative pressure exerted upon non-governmental organisations in Belarus, threatens their existence and undermines their independence,

E. whereas in January 2008 there was a series of protests by entrepreneurs in Minsk, and the leaders of those demonstrations were detained and often beaten,

F. whereas positive developments in the establishment of the Commission's delegation in Minsk have taken place recently,