

Thursday 22 October 2009

Sri Lanka

P7_TA(2009)0061

European Parliament resolution of 22 October 2009 on Sri Lanka

(2010/C 265 E/07)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions of 18 May 2000 ⁽¹⁾, 14 March 2002 ⁽²⁾ and 20 November 2003 ⁽³⁾ on Sri Lanka, of 13 January 2005 ⁽⁴⁾ on the tsunami disaster in the Indian Ocean, of 18 May 2006 ⁽⁵⁾ on the situation in Sri Lanka and of 5 February 2009 ⁽⁶⁾ on Sri Lanka,
 - having regard to the open letters of the European Commissioner for External Relations of 16 June 2009 and 21 September 2009 on the situation in Sri Lanka,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions of 18 May 2009 on Sri Lanka,
 - having regard to Rule 122 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas all the territories in the north of Sri Lanka formerly held by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have been retaken,
- B. whereas 25 years of conflict, which ended with the defeat of the LTTE in 2009, have resulted in more than 90 000 deaths,
- C. whereas, following the end of the conflict, more than 250 000 Tamil civilians are being held in camps for screening and resettlement, where there are serious concerns about overcrowding and inadequate access to clean water, sanitation and medical facilities and where they have no freedom of movement,
- D. whereas the Sri Lankan Government denies humanitarian and human rights organisations adequate access to the camps,
- E. whereas the international community must continue to provide humanitarian aid, including trained staff,
- F. whereas the Sri Lankan Government needs to be generous and proactive in addressing the concerns and interests of its Tamil citizens and to implement rapidly and fully the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution, as well as further and significant devolution measures so that the Tamil peoples, too, see the defeat of the LTTE as a liberation,
- G. whereas the human rights situation is unlikely to improve without the involvement of permanent international observers, in particular from organisations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC),
- H. whereas numerous journalists covering the conflict and the post-conflict situation in Sri Lanka have experienced violence and intimidation,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 59, 23.2.2001, p. 278.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 47 E, 27.2.2003, p. 613.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 87 E, 7.4.2004, p. 527.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 247 E, 6.10.2005, p. 147.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 297 E, 7.12.2006, p. 384.

⁽⁶⁾ Texts adopted, P6_TA(2009)0054.

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- I. whereas Sri Lanka's economic recovery will depend greatly on foreign direct investment and also on continued EU support,
 - J. whereas large areas of former conflict zones are contaminated by anti-personnel mines and other explosive debris of war,
 1. Deeply deplores the fact that more than 250 000 people are still detained in camps and calls on the Sri Lankan Government to take all necessary steps to organise the quick return home of those detained, as well as the urgent delivery of humanitarian assistance to them, in line with its obligation to protect all people under its jurisdiction; emphasises the need to give the ICRC and the UN specialised agencies a key role in this process;
 2. Calls on the Sri Lankan authorities to grant humanitarian organisations free access to the camps in order to provide those detained with the necessary humanitarian assistance, particularly with the imminent arrival of monsoon rains in the north of the country;
 3. Urges society worldwide to continue providing humanitarian patronage, in order to contribute to a lasting peace, and calls on international donors to link funding for the camps to compliance with commitments on resettlement and to implement a time-limited programme of assistance to the camps;
 4. Calls on all Tamil leaders to commit to a political settlement and to renounce terrorism and violence once and for all;
 5. Insists that the Sri Lankan Government is under an obligation to apply international human right standards in judicial proceedings against members of the LTTE;
 6. Recognises Sri Lanka's development of a National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights;
 7. Calls on the Sri Lankan Government to expedite plans for reconciliation and regional devolution as included in the country's constitution;
 8. Urges the Sri Lankan Government to stop the repression of the media under anti-terrorist legislation and to allow freedom of the press; and calls on it, now that the conflict has ended, to review its anti-terrorist legislation and to ensure that all alleged violations of media freedom are the subject of full, open and transparent investigations;
 9. Urges the Sri Lankan Government to give further and increased attention to the clearance of landmines, the presence of which presents a serious obstacle to rehabilitation and economic regeneration; calls on it, in this regard, to take the very positive step of acceding to the Ottawa Treaty (Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction), and urges the Commission, in particular, to sponsor additional support for urgent mine-clearance work in Sri Lanka;
 10. Welcomes the introduction of the Victim and Witness Assistance and Protection Bill, which is currently at second reading in the Sri Lankan Parliament;
 11. Takes note of holding of local elections in northern Sri Lanka;
 12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Member States, the UN Secretary-General, the Secretary-General of the British Commonwealth, the International Committee of the Red Cross, Human Rights Watch, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, the Government of Sri Lanka and all other member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.
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