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The situation in the Middle East

European Parliament resolution on the situation in the Middle East

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in the Middle East, in particular its resolution of 1 June 2006 on the humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian territories and the role of the EU¹,
- having regard to UN Security Council Resolutions 1701(2006), 1559(2004), 520(1982), 426(1978), 338(1973) and 242(1967),
- having regard to the statement issued by the European Parliament's Conference of Presidents on 20 July 2006,
- having regard to the Co-Chairmen Statement of the Rome International Conference for Lebanon of 26 July 2006,
- having regard to the conclusions of the extraordinary General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) meeting of 25 August 2006,
- having regard to the statement of the Bureau of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) adopted on 24 August 2006,
- having regard to the conclusions of the Stockholm Conference for Lebanon's Early Recovery, held on 31 August 2006, [taken from para. 13]
- having regard to the Geneva Conventions on international humanitarian law,
- having regard to the statement made by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territories at the UN Human Rights Council special session held in Geneva on 5 July 2006,
- having regard to Articles 15, 16 and 19 of the EU Treaty,
- having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the conflict in Lebanon has resulted in a humanitarian catastrophe, which has caused hundreds of deaths and injuries on both sides, extensive damage to civilian infrastructure and hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons, and has not come to an end with the ceasefire,
- B. deeply shocked by the outbreak of hostilities in south Lebanon, the attacks by Hezbollah and the overreaction in the use of force by the Israeli army, which were a serious threat to international peace and security,
- C. noting the call by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to examine whether breaches of international law occurred during the conflict,
- D. having regard to the serious extent of the Israeli bombings and firing of rockets by Hezbollah and Palestinian militias against civilian populations,
- E. whereas UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1701 calls on the Government of Lebanon to extend its authority over the territory of the country through its own

¹ *Texts Adopted*, P6_TA(2006)0237.

legitimate armed forces, and has decided to increase the force strength of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and extend its mandate,

- F. whereas UNSC Resolution 1701 calls upon the Government of Israel to withdraw all of its forces from south Lebanon as the deployment of UNIFIL begins and to put to an end to the blockade of airports and harbours in Lebanon,
- G. emphasising the role that a totally democratic and sovereign Lebanon can play in the implementation of a solution to the Middle-East crisis and in the development of a strong Euro-Mediterranean Partnership,
- H. stressing that the humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Territories is worsening in spite of the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM) set up by the international community in order to continue providing assistance to the Palestinian population,
- I. whereas the Middle East peace process is in a political and diplomatic deadlock although a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is needed for the establishment of peace and security in the whole region,
- J. whereas the European Union has a special responsibility for peace and security in the Middle East, which is Europe's neighbourhood, and whereas the instruments and methods for the coordination of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) must therefore be improved, including through the adoption of a common position in the framework of the CFSP and on the basis of Articles 15 and 16 of the EU Treaty,
 - 1. Expresses its serious concern over the extension and intensity of the military conflict in south Lebanon and deeply regrets the casualties among civilians, soldiers and UN observers in Lebanon and/or Israel, and the massive destruction of infrastructure; reaffirms that there is no military solution to the conflict in the Middle East;
 - 2. Stresses, in this connection, that no ceasefire can be lasting without the parties directly or indirectly involved showing the political will to tackle the root causes of the recent crisis;
 - 3. Reiterates the call for the immediate release of the kidnapped Israeli soldiers and of the members of the Palestinian Government and members of the Palestinian Legislative Council imprisoned by Israel;
 - 4. Welcomes the unanimous adoption by the UNSC of Resolution 1701, which establishes the conditions for putting an end to the military operations and reinforces UNIFIL with a strong mandate aimed at increasing its capacity to prevent any violation of the ceasefire, assist the Lebanese Government in exercising full sovereignty and effective control over the territory of the country, including the territorial waters, support the full implementation of UNSC Resolution 1559 and contribute to the protection of the civilian population and UNIFIL itself;
 - 5. Welcomes the Lebanese Government's decision to deploy its forces in south Lebanon and the Israeli army's agreement to withdraw behind the Blue Line as provided for in UNSC Resolution 1701; welcomes the Lebanese Government's strong support for an enhanced role for UNIFIL;
 - 6. Considers that the UNIFIL mandate should represent a serious commitment to providing adequate assistance to the Lebanese Government in the establishment of effective control and security arrangements, as determined in UNSC Resolutions 1559 and 1701;
 - 7. Welcomes the outcome of the abovementioned GAERC meeting, in particular the full support expressed by the Council for the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1701, and the Member States' commitment to provide about 7 000 soldiers out of a maximum of 15

000 UNIFIL forces;

8. Underlines the active role taken by France and Italy; fully supports the decision that France will continue to assume the command of UNIFIL until February 2007 and that Italy will then take over ground control; stresses, nevertheless, that any duplication of command structures must be avoided;
9. Stresses, nevertheless, the importance of clearly and adequately defining the mandate, rules of engagement, structure and competences of UNIFIL, if necessary to be agreed under a new UNSC resolution, which should take into account the lessons learnt from previous UN peacekeeping engagements, notably in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
10. Considers it vital that all weapon imports into Lebanon be directed only to the official Lebanese army and asks the Lebanese Government to ensure, in cooperation with UNIFIL, the full implementation of UNSC Resolution 1559; stresses also the importance for all the EU Member States to act in line with the requirements of Resolution 1701 related to arms supplies; and stresses that this settlement should lead to the disarming of all militias, including that of Hezbollah, and measures to prevent the entry of arms into Lebanon;
11. Calls on Member States to respect strictly the Code of Conduct on Arms Export as regards all deliveries of weapons to the region;
12. Calls on the European Union to undertake to work with all the parties involved and calls on these parties to honour their commitments scrupulously, with a view to the full implementation of UNSC Resolution 1701, so as to allow access for emergency humanitarian assistance and the return of displaced persons under the safest possible conditions; urges, in this context, the lifting of the air and sea blockade of Lebanon and recalls, in the light of the relevant provisions of Resolution 1701, that establishing effective measures in the area of arms, related materials, training or assistance, is a priority;
13. Points out that strong, quick and effective efforts are needed for the reconstruction of Lebanon; welcomes, in this regard, the conclusions of the Stockholm Conference for Lebanon's Early Recovery, in which donor countries decided to contribute substantively to the reconstruction of the country, and the Commission and Member States announced the grant of EUR 120 million in humanitarian aid;
14. Calls on the Council and the Commission to continue their efforts to establish a living partnership with democratic political forces and civil society, in order to support further democratisation in Lebanon after the events of March 2005;
15. Calls urgently on Iran and Syria to play a constructive role, especially with regard to the implementation of UNSC Resolutions 1559 and 1701; calls specifically on Syria to step up controls on its side of the Lebanese-Syrian border in accordance with Resolution 1701, which requires neighbouring countries to prevent supplies of weapons to non-State entities;
16. Calls on the Council and the Commission to restart a genuine dialogue with Syria in order to engage this country in peace efforts for a comprehensive settlement of the conflict; expects that the UN Secretary-General's report provided for in UNSC Resolution 1701 on the delineation of the international borders in Lebanon, including the dispute over the Shebaa farms area, will contribute to progress in this issue;
17. Calls for a comprehensive international high-level inquiry to be conducted with the good

offices of the UN Secretary-General in Lebanon and Israel with a mandate to investigate reports of serious human rights violations, the plight of victims and the violation of humanitarian law;

18. Considers in this context that the European Union, as a major donor, and the international community should study ways of establishing possible conditions of accountability;
19. Welcomes the early action of the Commission's monitoring and information centre planning to tackle the oil slick that has contaminated more than 50 km of Lebanese coastline; stresses the need for measures to fight pollution in certain areas and especially against the disastrous impact of the oil slick off the Lebanese shoreline; calls on the Member States and the Commission to provide assistance and a response within the framework of the Pollution Prevention and Response Protocol to the Barcelona Convention and through the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea, which operates within the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan;
20. Deeply deplores the deteriorating situation of the population and civilian infrastructure in Gaza and the West Bank; asks all sides to break the vicious circle of attacks and counter-attacks, which have resulted in hundreds of deaths and injuries and extensive damage to civilian infrastructure;
21. Stresses the need to bring the Middle East peace process back to the top of the international political agenda; calls on the Quartet (UN, EU, USA and Russia) to revive the implementation of the Roadmap with a view to the annual UN General Assembly session in September 2006; reaffirms that the two-state solution, with an Israeli and a Palestinian state co-existing in peace and security, is a key condition for a peaceful and lasting settlement in the Middle East;
22. Calls on the Council and the Commission to continue to guarantee, together with the international community, essential humanitarian aid for the Palestinian population; demands that the TIM be reinforced and extended in terms of duration and resources; calls on the Israeli Government urgently to resume the transfer of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues; calls on Israel to permit the movement of people, respecting the Agreement on Movement and Access in Rafah and at other border crossings in Gaza;
23. Restates its support for the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, in his efforts to promote a national dialogue between the various Palestinian parties, with the aim of setting up a new Palestinian government;
24. Considers that the presence of a multinational force in Lebanon could be taken as an exemplary model to be followed in the negotiation process for a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict;
25. Calls on the Council to make every effort to convene an international peace conference – such as the Madrid Conference in 1991 – in order to find a comprehensive, lasting and viable solution to the problems in the area, based on the relevant UNSC resolutions, which includes the right of Israel to live within secure and recognised borders and the right to a viable state for the Palestinians based on the Occupied Territories, and to deal in full with security and disarmament issues; considers that a unilateral approach by any of the parties concerned must be rejected;
26. Considers the involvement of the League of Arab States to be essential in this context; considers the 'Beirut Plan' of 2002, agreed by the member countries of the League of Arab States, and the Geneva Initiative, as important contributions to the negotiations, which

should be duly taken into account;

27. Takes the view that the EMPA, as the Barcelona Process' only parliamentary institution for elected representatives of the peoples of the southern Mediterranean shore and the European Union, must assume its responsibility for facilitating the resumption of dialogue and cooperation between the parties to the Middle-East situation; supports the EMPA Bureau's request to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Euromed Council of Foreign Ministers of the Barcelona Process as soon as possible;
28. Believes that in the medium to long term, the building of institutions uniting the countries of the Mediterranean basin, such as a Euro-Mediterranean Development Bank, will be the best guarantor of lasting peace and human development; and calls on EU Member States to strive for the creation of such institutions, rather than to seek bilateral agreements;
29. Is in favour of sending a fact-finding delegation to Lebanon, Palestine and Israel in order to monitor the situation, with special focus on the humanitarian and political conditions;
30. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Secretary-General, the President of the UN General Assembly, the governments and parliaments of Israel, Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Iran, the USA and Russia, and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.