Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1358 (1998)[1]

Situation in Algeria

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly strongly condemns the continuing wave of massacres in Algeria and expresses its sympathy and solidarity with the victims and their families.

2. The Assembly recalls that millions of men and women of Muslim confession live in member states of the Council of Europe and form part of European society. The Assembly also recognises that Islam – as other main religions – preaches tolerance, peace and understanding. It is extremists and terrorists who, abusing Islam for their criminal purposes, are responsible for the terrible events in Algeria. They are, moreover, contributing to a dangerous confusion, which damages first of all Islam itself, and which, furthermore, endangers the co-existence between Muslims and other citizens in Europe and elsewhere.

3. The Assembly considers that these barbaric acts of terrorism constitute a direct threat to peace and stability in the Mediterranean region. International concern with these massive human rights violations can under no circumstances be considered as an interference in Algeria's internal affairs.

4. The Assembly explicitly asks the governments of Council of Europe member states to afford asylum seekers from Algeria the status of victims of violence and to suspend repatriations until a solution has been found to the conflict that is tearing the country apart.

5. The Assembly fully supports the initiatives of the European Union, such as the visit by ministerial representatives of the European Union troika, to contribute to a resolution of the crisis. It welcomes the readiness of the Algerian authorities to develop a dialogue with the European Union.

6. The Assembly calls on the political and religious leaders of member states of the Islamic Conference and Muslim communities worldwide to unequivocally condemn the savagery taking place in Algeria, to use all their influence to put an end to the violence, and to contribute generously to the provision of international humanitarian aid. In this regard the Assembly welcomes the recent condemnation of the violence in Algeria by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, which stressed the anti-Islamic character of these massacres.

7. The Assembly wishes European governments to take measures to prevent any form of arms trading that could lead to further extremism and terrorism in Algeria.

8. The Assembly calls on the Algerian Government to:

8.1. accept a visit by a representative of the United Nations;

8.2. guarantee free access by international organisations, non-governmental organisations and the media, including television;

8.3. accept international humanitarian assistance as well as support in combating terrorism;

8.4. establish a genuine political dialogue with all political forces which, as a precondition for direct negotiations, are prepared to reject violence and accept the rules of democracy.

9. The Assembly calls on member states to avoid any kind of support for those in exile or asylum who are involved in financing, aiding and encouraging terrorism in Algeria.

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1. Assembly debate on 29 January 1998 (7th Sitting) (see Doc. 7997, report of the Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mr Atkinson). Text adopted by the Assembly on 29 January 1998 (7th Sitting).

10. The Assembly will endeavour to establish a dialogue with the Algerian Parliament in order to explore how the Council of Europe's considerable expertise in the fields of democracy, human rights and the rule of law can be made available to Algeria.

11. The Assembly welcomes the statement by the Chairman-in-Office of the Committee of Ministers before the Assembly on 27 January 1998. It therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

11.1. condemn the violence in Algeria and express its solidarity with the Algerian people;

11.2. examine the possibility of contributing to the European Union initiative.