Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 1520 (2006)[1]

Recent developments in Lebanon in the context of the situation in the Middle East

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly deplores the tragic events which took place in Lebanon in July and August 2006, resulting in the death of over 1 100 Lebanese, including about 530 Hezbollah fighters, and of 40 Israeli civilians and 117 soldiers, as well as the destruction of infrastructure. Among the victims are also two abducted, and still missing, Israeli soldiers and their families. The Assembly condemns the terrorist acts of Hezbollah and its policy of violence resulting in numerous rocket attacks on civilian targets in Israel. At the same time, it condemns the disproportionate use of force by Israel, and indiscriminate attacks on civilian targets.

2. The Assembly welcomes the efforts made by the international community in order to stop the hostilities, and in particular the adoption of United Nations Resolution 1701 and the deployment of an international peacekeeping force. It notes with satisfaction the role played by the European Union in forming this force and its contribution in terms of the number of soldiers. The prompt humanitarian aid at the time of the crisis and commitments to assist in Lebanon's reconstruction are also to be welcomed.

3. The parties to the conflict, for their part, must assume their responsibilities. UN Resolution 1559 requiring the disarmament of Hezbollah has to be implemented and the restoration of sustainable and full sovereignty for Lebanon in its own territory must be ensured.

4. The Assembly is very concerned about the destabilising role of Iran and Syria in the region and their active and/or passive support for terrorist activities as well as the provision of weapons (for example, the rockets used by Hezbollah).

5. Furthermore, the Assembly expresses its utmost concern about the developments in the Gaza Strip since the beginning of Israel's military offensive of 27 June 2006, following the capture of an Israeli soldier by Palestinian militants. The incursions have so far resulted in the death of over 200 Palestinians, many of whom were civilians, and the destruction of key civilian infrastructure.

6. The detention by Israel of Mr Aziz Dweik, Speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), arrested on 6 August 2006, as well as of approximately 40 Palestinian parliamentarians and ministers is equally a matter of serious concern. The Assembly stresses that these people have been legitimately elected.

7. The Assembly nevertheless welcomes the declarations by Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas on their readiness to meet without prior conditions and the announcement of the Middle East summit to be held in the near future.

8. Similarly, recent attempts to establish a unity government within the Palestinian Authority, with the participation of Fatah, can only inspire cautious optimism. This process must be pursued despite the difficulties and obstacles.

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1. Assembly debate on 5 October 2006 (29th Sitting) (see Doc. 11056, report of the Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mr Lindblad). Text adopted by the Assembly on 5 October 2006 (29th Sitting).

9. The Assembly reiterates that any unity government, if established, must comply with the three requirements laid down by the international community, namely recognition of Israel, commitment to the principle of non-violence, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations.

10. The Assembly reaffirms its conviction that the road map continues to be the valid reference for the peace negotiations and a two-state solution.

11. A lasting political solution in the region can only be achieved through political dialogue among all parties concerned, including countries which have not been directly involved in the hostilities. There is no doubt that the conflict must be viewed within the broader context of the Middle East region rather than within the limited context of Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Lebanon.

12. The Assembly moreover believes that increased involvement of the international community is an essential condition for achieving progress towards a political settlement and that Europe – and the European Union in particular – should be actively engaged in this respect.

13. For its part, the Council of Europe should contribute actively to the creation of a positive climate in the region capable of fostering a political settlement. The 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, held in Warsaw in 2005, set clear priorities for future action, including the promotion of democratic values and intercultural dialogue.

14. The Assembly considers itself to be particularly well placed to pursue such a dialogue at the parliamentary level with all parties concerned in the region.

15. The Assembly firmly believes that the only way to establish peace and stability in the region is through democracy, respect for all human rights and the rule of law.

16. The Assembly calls on the leaders of the Palestinian Authority to:

16.1. step up their efforts to create a unity government which complies with the requirements of the international community, as defined in paragraph 9;

16.2. engage in political dialogue with Israel on the basis of the road map;

16.3. step up efforts to disarm armed groups, including Hamas.

17. The Assembly calls on the leaders of Israel to:

17.1. halt military incursions into the Gaza Strip;

17.2. release those Palestinian parliamentarians and ministers against whom no charges have been brought;

17.3. engage in political dialogue on the basis of the road map.

18. The Assembly calls on the leaders of Lebanon to:

18.1. implement UN Resolution 1559 requiring the disarmament of Hezbollah;

18.2. implement UN Resolution 1701 requiring the immediate release of the two abducted Israeli soldiers;

18.3. step up actions aimed at restoring full and effective sovereignty and control of the legitimate authority over the whole Lebanese territory;

18.4. engage in further democratic reforms and pursue the democratic transformation of the country.

19. The Assembly strongly urges the leaders of Hamas to comply with the requirements of the international community concerning the commitment to non-violence, the recognition of Israel and the acceptance of previous agreements.

20. The Assembly calls on the international community, in particular the Quartet and the European Union to:

20.1. step up their efforts aimed at achieving a lasting political solution;

20.2. support the idea launched by the European Parliament to convene a conference on security and co-operation in the Middle East;

20.3. examine closely the proposal of the European Parliament to create a Euro- Mediterranean development fund;

20.4. contribute generously to the reconstruction of Lebanon.

21. The Assembly calls on the parliaments of the region, including Iran's, to contribute to regional stability and to engage in a meaningful dialogue.

22. The Assembly resolves to pursue the dialogue engaged with the Palestinian Legislative Council, and step up efforts aimed at facilitating contacts between members of the PLC and the Knesset.

23. At the same time the Assembly asks the Political Affairs Committee to explore the possibilities of initiating a meaningful dialogue on a parliamentary level with the parliaments of the broader region.