

European Communities

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1980 - 1981

8 May 1980

DOCUMENT 1-149/80

Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Development and Cooperation

on the situation in the Central African Republic

Rapporteur: Mr G. JAQUET

At the sitting of 19 July 1979, the President of the European Parliament referred the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr SARRE and Mr JAQUET pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure (Doc. 1-232/79), on the situation in the Central African State, to the Committee on Development and Cooperation as the committee responsible and to the Political Affairs Committee for its opinion.

On 28 September 1979, the President of the European Parliament referred the motion for a resolution (Doc. 1-367/79) tabled by Mr SARRE, Mr GLINNE, Mr ROGERS, Mrs CRESSON, Mr SUTRA, Mr OEHLER, Mr MOTCHANE, Mr ESTIER, Mrs FUILLET and Mrs ROUDY, with request for urgent debate pursuant to Rule 14 of the Rules of Procedure, on the situation in Central Africa, to the Committee on Development and Cooperation as the committee responsible and to the Political Affairs Committee for its opinion.

On 25 September 1979, the Committee on Development and Cooperation appointed Mr Jaquet rapporteur.

It considered these motions at its meetings of 30 October 1979 and 18 December 1979.

At its meeting of 29 April 1980, the committee unanimously adopted the following motion for a resolution and explanatory statement.

Present: Mr Poniatowski, chairman; Mr Kühn, vice-chairman; Mr Cohen, Mrs Cassanmagnago-Cerretti, Mr Estgen (deputizing for Mr Lecanuet), Mrs Focke, Mr Michel, Mr Pearce, Mrs Rabbethge, Mr Sablé, Mr Sherlock (deputizing for Mr Marshall), Mr Simmonds, Mr J.D. Taylor (deputizing for Mr Warner) and Mr Vergeer.

The opinion of the Political Affairs Committee is attached.

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The Committee on Development and Cooperation hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on the situation in the Central African Republic

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr SARRE and Mr JAQUET, on behalf of the Socialist Group, on the situation in the Central African State (Doc. 1-232/79) and the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr SARRE and others on the situation in Central Africa (Doc. 1-367/79),
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Development and Cooperation and the opinion of the Political Affairs Committee (Doc. 1-149/80),
- 1. Welcomes the fact that the Community observed the principle, in giving aid to the Central African State, that it should not be used to support the regime of 'Emperor' Bokassa;
- 2. Affirms that aid should be given to countries which are victims of such violations of basic human rights in such a way as to benefit the population and not the regime;
- 3. Believes, however, that the Community must establish a more systematic and less covert approach to the question of how to implement aid programmes in countries where the regime is flagrantly violating human rights, so as to:
 - (a) put the legal basis of such action beyond question,
 - (b) identify the Community authority which makes this decision, so that it can be held accountable for its action,
 - (c) improve the monitoring of aid implementation plans in the countries concerned;
- 4. Wishes to see genuine democratic procedures instituted as soon as possible with the participation of the population concerned and without any external military intervention;

5. Welcomes the Commission's prompt action in drawing up emergency aid plans, and hopes that it will be possible to implement these in the very near future.
6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution and the report of its committee to the Council and the Commission of the European Communities.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. The Committee on Development and Cooperation is called upon to discuss two motions for resolutions which were referred to it by Parliament. The first of these, tabled by Mr SARRE and Mr JAQUET on behalf of the Socialist Group (Doc. 1-232/79), concerns the period before the fall of Bokassa and proposes measures against his regime which are less urgent now that Bokassa has been overthrown.
2. Nevertheless this resolution remains relevant for the general discussion of the question of how the Community should act with regard to countries in which human rights are violated.
3. The second motion for a resolution, tabled by Mr SARRE and others (Doc. 1-367/79), concerns the period after the fall of Bokassa and this resolution is largely concerned with the actions of a Member State of the Community in bringing about the downfall of Bokassa and its subsequent political and military activity in Central Africa.
4. The two resolutions are therefore concerned with rather different matters and it is proposed to deal with these separately.
5. It should also be remembered that the Committee on Development and Cooperation tabled an oral question in May 1979 on the massacres in the Central African Empire which was reiterated in September (Doc. 1-284/79) and in which the Commission was asked what conclusions it had drawn from the report by the African Committee of Enquiry on the massacres, particularly with regard to the insertion into the Convention of Lomé of a reference to human rights, and also with regard to the implementation of Cooperation Schemes under the Convention.
6. The Community's attitude towards countries (whether 'associated' or not) which flagrantly violate human rights is not entirely clear. On 21 June 1977, with regard to Uganda, the Council stated in a communication to the press that:

'The Council agrees to take steps within the framework of its relationship with Uganda under the Lomé Convention to ensure that any assistance given by the Community to Uganda does not in any way have as its effect a reinforcement or prolongation of the denial of basic human rights to its people.'

7. The Commission, for its part, in a declaration by its spokesman dated 12 August 1977, stated the following:

'As regards the implementation of cooperation projects laid down in the Convention of Lomé and the convention that will succeed it, the Community's attitude in all the ACP States was defined by the resolution of the Council of Ministers of 21 June 1977, which states that in the event of flagrant violation of human rights the Community will take any steps necessary to ensure that its aid is actually used to meet the needs of the recipient populations and cannot be appropriated for other purposes.'

The Commission states that it has followed this principle in the case of Central Africa.

8. The problem which exists in cutting off all aid, as proposed by Resolution 232/79, is that this action could hurt the people of the country, who are already suffering from violations of their rights by the regime. There is a second problem in that, in the case of countries which are signatories to the Lomé Convention, there is a contractual agreement between the two parties, which means that the Community has legal obligations to fulfil its commitments.

9. The statements of position by the Council and Commission (which incidentally are not identical) provide the guidelines for Community action with regard to aid to Lomé countries where human rights are violated. They enable the Community to meet legal obligations while avoiding - at least in theory - the accusation that this action is supporting a particular regime.

10. There are, however, grey areas in applying these principles. Firstly, a cardinal principle of the Lomé Conventions is that each recipient country should provide its own indicative programme for aid. Yet it would appear that the Council and Commission have abrogated the right to provide aid as the recipient sees fit in these cases. The choice of aid beneficiaries is therefore made not by the recipient country but by the Community.

11. Secondly, it is unclear who makes the decision on whether or not aid should be supplied for particular projects and which authority or institution is accountable for this decision.

12. Thirdly, it is similarly unclear who monitors the use of aid so that it does in fact benefit the population rather than support the regime. In Ethiopia, for example, aid was restricted for a time to food aid, but in order to distribute this aid the Commission made trucks available for its transport. Are we to believe that these trucks have subsequently been used for no other use than humanitarian ones? (The Commission has a delegation

in most countries which no doubt provides information on the use of aid, but the territories of some of these countries are quite enormous.)

13. None of these questions has been satisfactorily answered by the Commission or the Council to date. The attitude of the Community has over the last months been directed towards the establishment of a reference to human rights in the new Convention of Lomé, as though this reference would be sufficient to enable aid programmes to be implemented according to specific criteria. The ACP countries have resisted this attempt to introduce a human rights clause into the Convention, but rather general parallel declarations were made at the time of the signature of the new Convention. This act is not in itself sufficient to provide answers to the key questions on how to apportion aid; unless specific decisions are reached on this point, the declarations will remain little more than token expressions of goodwill which have little practical meaning. It should be remembered that, even if the principle has been established and loudly trumpeted, the decision on whether to apply that principle will always be a political one. There can be no automatic application of the principle against an offending country. On the other hand, if the decision is simply left to officials acting pragmatically, it is conceivable that the Community could be acting illegally, or indeed it could open itself to the accusation that it is furthering its own interests rather than those of developing countries.

14. The subject therefore requires further debate, with the object not so much of planting a totem pole around which all concerned can dance, but rather achieving specific guidelines for action. For example, it might be a solution if the Council adopts guidelines which state that, if a regime is found indisputably to be violating basic human rights, then the Council may ask the Commission to ensure that any aid given is in line with the terms of its declaration of 21 June 1977.

15. The second resolution with which the committee is concerned deals with the events that brought about the fall of Bokassa and subsequent developments. The resolution is largely concerned with political and military circumstances, rather than development and cooperation, and is thus somewhat outside the normal ambit of the Committee on Development and Cooperation which has a policy of refraining from commenting on the political situation in developing countries, provided only that basic human rights are respected.

16. In line with this policy your rapporteur would therefore like to limit the discussion to certain points. Firstly, it is quite clear that the French government had connections with the Bokassa regime which were not only the main cause of the maintenance of that dictator in power, but also led French ministers to make statements which appeared to take no account of the massacres which took place earlier this year.

17. Secondly, it was undoubtedly the establishment of the veracity of the allegations of massacres by the African Committee of Enquiry which led the French government to change its policy of support for the regime, and it was this change of policy, together with pressure from other African states, that led Bokassa to turn to Libya for help.

18. Thirdly, although it is again undoubtedly true that French troops played a key role in the action which led to Bokassa's overthrow, it is also true that this action was supported by the bulk of the population, or the event would have been very bloody. It is now time these troops were withdrawn from the country.

19. This brief statement of the role of a Member State of the Community in Central Africa requires no further commentary. Parliament should deplore the role played by the Member State concerned, although we must equally be realistic about the possible alternatives. The departure of Idi Amin from Uganda has not been enough on its own to solve all the problems involved. Equatorial Guinea, which was devastated by Macias Nguema, requires order and peace before anything else. We cannot impose our own values of democracy on a country which has been ruined. It takes time to rebuild the basic infrastructure and supply basic needs before the population can be expected to take part in orderly democratic elections.

20. Thus, Parliament should welcome the prompt action taken by the Commission in sending a delegation to the Central African Republic from 26 October to 5 November to study the country's most urgent economic needs, focussing on the modification of the indicative aid programme. The Commission is currently studying the possibility of granting emergency aid worth 300,000 EUA to the country and the money made available will be used for the purchase of medicines, food and particularly sugar, chemicals for the purification of water and insecticides.

21. The priority for the Central African Republic must be the distribution of this emergency aid. Thereafter, it is essential that the political values of a free and independent African state, which is recovering its rightful place in the community of nations, should be re-established.

OPINION OF THE POLITICAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Letter from Mr Mariano Rumor, chairman of the Political Affairs Committee,
to Mr Poniatowski, chairman of the Committee on Development and Cooperation

Brussels, 23 April 1980

Dear Mr Chairman,

At its meeting of 22 and 23 April 1980, the Political Affairs Committee discussed the situation in Central Africa, having been asked for an opinion on this subject for your committee¹.

The committee took note of the draft report presented by Mr JAQUET to your committee. At the end of its discussion the Political Affairs Committee approved by a majority vote the text of Mr JAQUET's draft motion for a resolution, with the exception of paragraph 4 which it recommends be deleted.

(sgd) Mariano RUMOR

- ¹ - motion for a resolution tabled by Mr SARRE and others on the situation in Central Africa (Doc. 1-367/79)
- motion for a resolution tabled by Mr SARRE and Mr JAQUET on the situation in the Central African State (Doc. 1-232/79)

Present: Mr Rumor, chairman; Mr Estier, vice-chairman; Lord Bethell, vice-chairman; Mr Aigner (deputizing for Mr von Hassel), Mr Ansart, Mr Antoniozzi, Mrs Baduel-Glorioso (deputizing for Mr Amendola), Mr Blumenfeld, Mr Cariglia, Mrs Cassanmagnago-Cerretti, Mr Damseaux (deputizing for Mr Berkhouwer), Lady Elles, Mr Fergusson, Mr B. Friedrich, Mr Haagerup, Mrs van den Heuvel, Mr C. Jackson, Mr Lalor, Mrs Lenz (deputizing for Mr Klepsch), Mrs Lizin (deputizing for Mr van Miert), Mr Lomas, Mrs Macciocchi (deputizing for Mrs Hammerich), Mr Penders, Mr Prag (deputizing for Mr Jakobsen), Mr Romualdi, Mr Scott-Hopkins, Mr Seefeld (deputizing for Mr Brandt), Mr Segre (deputizing for Mr Berlinguer), Mr Seitlinger and Mr Zagari.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (DOCUMENT 1-232/79)

tabled by Mr SARRE and Mr JAQUET on behalf of the Socialist Group pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure on the situation in the Central African State

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the publication of the report of the African committee of investigation,
 - whereas the forces of political opposition are regrouping within a coordination committee,
1. Condemns the bloody regime of 'Emperor' Bokassa I;
 2. Invites the Commission and the Member States to withhold from him all economic, financial and military aid;
 3. Calls on the countries bound by the Lomé agreements systematically to boycott the Central African State;
 4. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments of the Member States.

REASONS SUPPORTING THE REQUEST FOR URGENT DEBATE

This resolution is justified by the report of the investigation committee which confirms the existence of a regime of oppression in the Central African Empire.

ANNEX II

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (DOCUMENT 1-367/79)

tabled by Mr SARRE, Mr GLINNE, Mr ROGERS, Mrs CRESSON, Mr SUTRA, Mr OEHLER, Mr MOTCHANE, Mr ESTIER, Mrs FUILLET and Mrs ROUDY
with request for urgent debate pursuant to Rule 14 of the Rules of Procedure on the situation in Central Africa

The European Parliament,

1. Welcomes the fact that international pressure, backed up by the report of the committee of enquiry of African legal experts, has succeeded in bringing about the downfall of BOKASSA;
2. Deplores the fact that his departure, far from putting an end to the flagrant interference by one of the Community Member States in the internal affairs of the Central African Republic was used by the government of that Member State to impose a successor;
3. Deplores the fact that the new authorities are more a reflection of intervention by a European government than of a democratic choice by the Central African people;
4. Hopes that civil liberties and the rule of law will be reinstated as soon as possible and calls on the Community institutions to assist the restoration of democracy in the Central African Republic;
5. Calls, therefore, for the immediate withdrawal of foreign military forces;
6. Hopes that in future Community cooperation policy, in particular under the Lomé Convention, will take the greatest possible account of respect for human rights;
7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission.

JUSTIFICATION

In view of the political situation and the continuing threats to respect for human rights in Central Africa, the European Parliament should give immediate attention to this motion for a resolution.

