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## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 115 of the Rules of Procedure

by Pasqualina Napoletano, Neena Gill and Robert Evans

on behalf of the PSE Group

on Bangladesh

**European Parliament resolution on Bangladesh**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Bangladesh (P6\_TA(2005)0136 of 14 April 2005)<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and the People's Republic of Bangladesh on partnership and development (OJ L 118, 27/04/2001),
- having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. welcoming the fact that Bangladesh is a serious partner to the EU which has made progress on its economic performance; noting, however, that the country continues to suffer from dysfunctional politics, massive corruption, poverty, widespread popular discontent and increasing Islamic militancy,
- B. taking note of the fact that the appointment of a caretaker administration headed by President Iajuddin Ahmed in the run-up to the January 2007 elections was marked by violent protests,
- C. whereas, according to the Constitution, consideration should have been given to a range of legal figures or "qualified citizens" before the President could have qualified for the position of Chief Adviser,
- D. noting that so far talks between the ruling BNP and the opposition AL failed to yield progress on the Awami demands for electoral reform, a neutral head of the interim government and the replacement of the election commission, accused of being biased towards the Government,
- E. whereas the compilation of the electoral register is heavily criticised by domestic and international observers; according to an estimate of the EU Commission 13 million of invalid names have been added to the register,
- F. whereas the AL has threatened to boycott the polls unless its demands for electoral reform are met,
- G. whereas fundamentalist militancy is sheltered by legitimate governing parties like Jamaad and encouraged by other militant Islamic parties,
- H. whereas strong concerns persist over Bangladesh's human rights' record and the situation with regard to minority protection has seriously deteriorated,

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<sup>1</sup> JO n° C 33 E, 09.02.2006, p. 594

- I. noting that while the media are generally vibrant and relatively diverse, violence against journalists is widespread; considérant qu'en 2006, 3 journalistes ont été tués et au moins 95 autres ont été agressés,
- J. considérant le cas particulièrement choquant de Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury, arrêté une première fois le 29 novembre 2003 pour prétendues activités d'espionnage pour Israël, persécuté depuis, qui risque la condamnation à mort lors d'un procès pour sédition le 13 novembre 2006,
1. Calls for the establishment of a strong and decisive caretaker government, that counteracts instability and instils confidence for an acceptable electoral process according to international standards and within the planned timeframe;
  2. Calls on the caretaker government to reconfigure the composition of the election commission in a transparent manner in consultation with political parties and other relevant election stakeholders and the wider public;
  3. Calls on the caretaker government to create a climate in which the electorate will feel genuinely free to use their right of vote, notably by disarming Muslim fundamentalist groups engaged in actions against religious tolerance; calls on all political parties to sign a code of conduct to promote a positive electoral environment to the benefit of voters and political contenders;
  4. Calls on the election commission, in cooperation with domestic and international experts, to improve the quality and accuracy of the voter register with the aim of removing dead voters and enrolling missing voters in order to ensure a register as accurate as possible in time for the elections;
  5. Calls on both BNP and AL to come to an agreement on all controversial electoral issues, to avoid political violence and instability and to develop political programmes which address the living conditions of the population, i.e. fight against poverty, the economic performance, energy supplies, rising prices and the garment factory conditions;
  6. Calls on all parties to improve women's representation in parliament and on the future government to increase the number of seats reserved for women;
  7. Welcomes the EU's Election Observation Mission to Bangladesh and all efforts by Member States and Commission to contribute to a congenial environment for a transparent electoral process; recommends the sending of an EP election observation mission to Bangladesh;
  8. Calls on Commission and Council to undertake all necessary steps to guarantee that free and fair elections are held as foreseen in January 2007 and that issues like voter registration and constituency boundaries are investigated and solved in a manner satisfactory to all election stakeholders;
  9. Calls on the Commission to stabilise democracy by granting support to Bangladesh's free media, to the reform of the security sector, to the civil society and in particular the

NGOs and to all activities promoting liberal secularism;

10. Calls on the Government of Bangladesh to respect the key international conventions on respect for human rights, in particular:
  - to put an end to the extrajudicial killings perpetrated by the Rapid Action Battalion and to investigate and punish adequately the numerous abuses
  - to put an end to the practice of torture by police and security forces (2297 victims in 2005, according to the Bangladesh Rehabilitation Centre for Trauma Victims)
  - not to allow the justice system to be abused in order to harass political opponents and civil society activists
  - to secure the rights of the indigenous communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, enshrined in the 1997 Peace Agreement; activate the promised Land Commission and hold elections to the Hill District Councils
  - to protect religious minority groups, in particular the Ahmadi, Hindu and Christian communities, the 2 latter being particularly vulnerable to violence during the election period
  - to take measures against domestic violence and acid throwing and against the poor conviction rates with respect to rape
  - to eliminate child labour, which remains a persistent problem, and to take significant steps against trafficking in women and children;
11. Demande aux autorités de mettre fin au climat d'impunité et d'engager des poursuites à l'encontre des auteurs d'agressions et de harcèlement envers les journalistes au Bangladesh; demande la libération immédiate de Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury, dont la détention défie toutes les normes de droits international;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the caretaker government of Bangladesh, the election commission of Bangladesh.