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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 Thomas Mann, Charles Tannock and Bernd Posselt

on behalf of the PPE-DE Group

on Bangladesh

European Parliament resolution on Bangladesh

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Bangladesh,
 - having regard to the Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and the People's Republic of Bangladesh on partnership and development,
 - having regard to the visit by the European Union (EU) Troika of Regional Directors to Dhaka from 23 to 25 January 2006,
 - having regard to the Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU of 16 March 2006 welcoming the arrest of two terrorist leaders by the Bangladeshi authorities,
 - having regard to the Statement attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) of 30 October 2006 on Bangladesh,
 - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the EU has good, long-standing relations with Bangladesh, including through the Cooperation Agreement on partnership and development,
- B. whereas Bangladesh has a long standing tradition of secular democracy, including the respect of human rights, women's rights, independence of the Judiciary and freedom of the press, but in recent years this has been challenged by Islamist extremism,
- C. whereas the EU has welcomed the arrest of two suspected terrorist leaders, and considered this to be a significant achievement, which demonstrates Bangladesh's strong commitment to the fight against terrorism,
- D. whereas journalists have been physically attacked by police officers and demonstrators when covering protests on 28 October in Dhaka, Rajshahi and Mohonganj,
- E. whereas there have been several violent incidents related to the forthcoming general election and the transitional arrangements, and thousands of activists laid siege to the building of the Election Commission headquarters in Dhaka on 9 November to press for its dismissal,
- F. whereas in Spring 2006 the Government took drastic measures to curb extremism, but Islamist groups continue to openly target members of religious minority communities,
1. Strongly condemns the physical attacks on journalists, and the violence related to the forthcoming general election and the transitional arrangements;
 2. Recognises the importance of the elections, which should take place on schedule and with full participation; considers that the caretaker government and the Election Commission are the principal guarantors for free and fair elections, and that there has to be cross-party confidence in both institutions; calls on the major political forces in Bangladesh to work together to find a common ground for the elections and bring an end to the election-related violence;

3. Urges the authorities in Bangladesh to protect members of religious minority communities against attacks by Islamist groups; welcomes the recent conviction by a court of two Islamic militants for murdering a Christian convert, but regrets the imposition of a death penalty;
4. Calls on the Council and the Commission to monitor closely the human rights and political situation in Bangladesh;
5. Welcomes the decision of the Commission to send an EU Election Observation Mission (EUEOM) to observe the forthcoming general election, and urges the rapid establishment of a European Parliament short term political EOM;
6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the caretaker government of Bangladesh.