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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 Jean Lambert and Gérard Onesta,

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

on Bangladesh

European Parliament resolution on Bangladesh

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution on the human rights' situation in Bangladesh, adopted on 14 April 2005, and to other resolutions which the Parliament has adopted on Bangladesh in the past,

– having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. welcoming the fact that a caretaker government has been formed, entrusted with the task of preparing for Bangladesh's next parliamentary elections, but notes with concern that many of the necessary preconditions in terms of the neutrality of electoral preparations have not yet been met,

B. concerned that Bangladesh's President, Iajuddin Ahmed, has taken upon himself the responsibility of chief of the country's caretaker government, by passing constitutional provisions relating to the selection of the appropriate person for this post,

C. concerned that the transition from the coalition government led by former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia towards the caretaker government has been marred by severe incidents of violence, in which both supporters of the previous government and supporters of the opposition have been involved and in which many lives have been lost,

D. whereas many civil society organisations in Bangladesh have criticised the existing voters list which has been drafted under the responsibility of the Election Commission earlier this year as deeply flawed,

E. whereas the former BNP-led coalition government has failed to ensure that the Election Commission is neutral and is recognized as such by broad sections of the Bangladeshi public,

F. whereas although violence perpetrated by paramilitary organisations with a Muslim-fundamentalist orientation has decreased as a result of steps taken by the former government in the later part of its tenure, top-level persons who had patronised these groups from within the administration have not been brought to book and many of the arms held by members of these organisations have still not been recovered,

G. considering that a white paper published by the recently formed Liberal Democratic Party of Bangladesh has charged officials of the former government with having misappropriated an amount of TK 60 billion from TK 150 billion spent under different power sector projects alone,

H. noting with concern that no concrete steps have been taken so far – either by the former coalition government or by the caretaker government – to ensure that the forthcoming parliamentary elections will be free from corruption and the use of illicit funds and 'black money',

I. whereas many trade union activists in the ready made garments' sector have been arrested on the basis of false cases or are under the threat of imprisonment; that commitments made by the former government on improvements in wages and other working conditions in the sector under tripartite negotiations held in May and June, still need to be implemented,

J. concerned by indications for a statements of civil society representatives in Bangladesh indicating that a climate of intimidation has spread among members of Bangladeshi's ethnic and religious minorities, who fear a repetition of the violence against Hindus and others which occurred on occasion of the October 2001 elections,

1. Calls on Bangladesh's care-taker government, led by President Iajuddin Ahmed, to take immediate steps to re-constitute the Election Commission, so as to ensure that the Election Commission will be able and be seen to perform its work in a truly neutral manner;

2. Calls on the caretaker government to take effective measures to correct the voters list, delete false voters, and ensure proper inclusion of members of minorities entitled to vote according to Bangladesh's Constitution;

3. Calls on the caretaker government to annul appointments, promotions and retirements of government officials which have taken place since the middle of 2006 and ensure that the government administration will be able effectively to support the holding of free and fair elections;

4. Calls on the caretaker government to create a climate in which all members of the electorate will genuinely feel free to use their right to vote, notably by disarming supporters of Muslim-fundamentalist groups engaged in actions and propaganda characterized by religious intolerance;

5. Reaffirms its commitment to Bangladesh's unique tradition of religious tolerance and secularism, as enshrined in the country's longstanding cultural traditions and artistic heritage and as endorsed in the European Parliament's previous resolutions;

6. Calls on the caretaker government to draft specific rules and regulations, aimed at preventing the use of illicit funds, black and misappropriated money by election candidates, and aimed also at putting a break on electoral spending, if possible in conformity with the existing ceiling on campaign spending;

7. Calls on the caretaker government to ensure full respect of human rights as part of its pledge to hold free and fair elections, notably by releasing garment union activists who have been illegally detained, and by withdrawing warrants of arrests and false court cases instituted against trade union leaders, including Mrs.Mushrefa Mishu;

8. Expresses its support for the European Commission's decision to send an election observation team to Bangladesh but advises the Commission to take steps to ensure that the team will have ample access to independent civil society information, including information in the Bengali language, and be able to make an in-depth assessment of the electoral process;

9. Calls on the Commission to use its good influence with other donors and with the

Bangladesh Government, so as to promote adoption of effective measures in line with the provisions of this Resolution;

10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the caretaker government of Bangladesh