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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 Naipoletano, 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, in particular its resolution of 16 November 2006<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to the state of emergency which was decreed by the Caretaker government of Bangladesh on 11 January 2007,
  - having regard to the Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and the People's Republic of Bangladesh on Partnership and Development<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the parliamentary elections which were to be held in Bangladesh on 22 January 2007 were postponed after poll-related violence by a High Court decision on 29 January 2007 and are now announced to take place before the end of 2008,
- B. whereas the state of emergency was declared on 11 January 2007 and former Central Bank Governor Fakhruddin Ahmed took over as head of the Caretaker government, on a platform for ending corruption,
- C. whereas the Caretaker Government, under the guise of ending corruption, has introduced sweeping repressive measures, including a ban on all political activity and the detention of over 160 political leaders and more than 100,000 civilians,
- D. whereas the army plays an increasingly central role in the nationwide crackdown on corruption, giving soldiers sweeping powers to raid homes of suspects and confiscate property and whereas the army is also increasingly involved in assisting the election commission with voter registration,
- E. whereas Bangladesh's longstanding tradition of secular democracy, including respect for human rights and especially women's rights, freedom of speech and religious tolerance is being seriously put at risk,
- F. whereas the renowned Bangladeshi lawyer, human rights' activist and UN Special

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<sup>1</sup> OJ

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 118, 27.04.2001, p. 48

Rapporteur Against Trafficking in Persons, Sigma Huda, was sentenced in July 2007 to 3 years' imprisonment on charges of bribery and corruption, whereas Ms Huda suffers from severe medical problems and there is a risk of a deterioration in her condition if she does not receive specialised medical treatment,

- G. whereas UN General Secretary Ban-Ki Moon on 7 July 2007 called on the authorities of Bangladesh to fully respect Ms Huda's fundamental rights,
  - H. whereas Bangladesh is an important economic partner of the European Union but infrastructural weaknesses and uncertainty surrounding the political situation threaten to undermine its economic outlook,
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- 1. Deplores the fact that the Caretaker Government, while making progress on tackling corruption, has been far less assertive on political reform; calls for a rapid return to democracy and the rule of law in Bangladesh and in particular for the lifting of the ban on all political activity, in order to provide all parties and political organisations to prepare for open and fair elections;
  - 2. Welcomes the publication of a roadmap for elections by the Election Commission in July 2007 and all efforts to overhaul the registration process and amend the electoral legislation;
  - 3. Calls for the lifting of the State of Emergency and the restoration of the rights accorded under the Constitution;
  - 4. Calls on the Caretaker Government to create a climate in which the electorate will feel genuinely free to use their right to vote; urges the Bangladeshi authorities to make progress towards a timetable for elections;
  - 5. Calls on the Bangladeshi authorities to ensure that the trials of Awami League's Sheikh Hasina, arrested on 16 July 2007 and charged with extortion, and BNP's Khaleda Zia, on charges of tax evasion, be conducted in a fair way and according to the rule of law;
  - 6. Acknowledges the valuable role played by the army in the distribution of flood relief;
  - 7. Is deeply concerned about the violent student protests which erupted in late August 2007 at Dhaka university, the heavy handed response and follow-up activities of the military and the police towards both students and journalists considering that the demonstrations were evidence of the unpopular political role played by the army; welcomes the fact that the curfew imposed in Dhaka and five other cities because of these protests has been lifted on 28 August 2007;

8. Demands an end to the creeping militarisation of the country; is deeply concerned about the role of the DGFI, the allegations of torture of persons held in custody and the deaths in custody in unexplained circumstances;
9. Considers that Bangladesh's outstanding contribution to UN Peace Keeping Missions will be put in jeopardy if corruption allegations are confirmed, thereby calling into question the international reputation of the whole country;
10. Calls for a review of the trial of Sigma Huda, who has been sentenced on alleged bribery charges; is deeply concerned about the conditions under which Ms Huda is incarcerated, in particular the lack of any medical treatment which she urgently needs; urges the Bangladeshi authorities to provide Ms Huda with all the medical treatment she needs and all help required by her state of health; calls on the Bangladeshi authorities to respect the fundamental rights of Ms Huda, in particular the right to receive visits from her family and friends in prison; urges the authorities to immediately allow these visits;
11. Calls on the Council and Commission to monitor carefully the human rights and political situation in Bangladesh in the light of recent events; calls on the working groups established between the EU and Bangladesh on institution building, administrative reform, governance and human rights to contribute actively to stabilising democracy in Bangladesh;
12. Calls on the Caretaker Government to make progress with the creation of a National Human Rights Commission, the implementation of which should also be a priority for the future government;
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Caretaker government of Bangladesh and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.