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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 Alexander Lambsdorff, Marios Matsakis, Frédérique Ries

on behalf of the ALDE Group

on Human Rights in Bangladesh

European Parliament resolution on Human Rights in Bangladesh

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Bangladesh and in particular its resolutions of 14 April 2005 and 16 November 2006,
 - having regard the visit to Bangladesh by the EU Troika in June 2007,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Bangladesh is a party,
 - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the demonstrations currently taking place in Bangladesh come after eight months of repressive emergency rule, which restricted rights to protest,
- B. whereas the present government initially enjoyed widespread support amongst major sections of the population,
- C. whereas the political situation before the imposition of the state of emergency was characterized by personal antagonism, refusal of dialogue among major political actors, occasional violence as well as extraordinarily high levels of corruption,
- D. whereas scores of politicians, journalists, businessmen and civil servants have been arrested and two former prime ministers have been arrested to face criminal charges,
- E. whereas a man died in Rajshahi, and several hundred were hurt in the capital and elsewhere during riots after student protests,
- F. whereas, since the imposition of the emergency rule, Bangladeshi armed forces have been responsible for abuses such as arbitrary detention, torture and death in custody,
- G. whereas the authorities have detained more than 250,000 people since the caretaker government took over in January 2007,
- H. whereas two previous Bangladeshi military governments have fallen after protests,
- I. whereas the EU Election Observation Mission suspended its operation on 22 January 2007 as the likelihood of a free and fair election seemed remote at that point in time,
- J. whereas the United Nations decided to withdraw their support for the electoral process on the same day,
- K. whereas, following these decisions by the EU and the United Nations, the national elections were cancelled and a state of emergency has been in place,

- L. whereas there is dissatisfaction among many in Bangladesh over what they see as the slow re-introduction of democracy,
- M. whereas elections are foreseen by the end of 2008,
1. Expresses its deep concern about the recent explosion of violence in Bangladesh where at least one person died and several hundred were hurt;
 2. Calls on the Government of Bangladesh to ensure the immediate release of the persons arrested subsequent to the students' and teachers' unrest;
 3. Demands an end to emergency powers and military rule and calls on the caretaker government gradually to lift the ban on political activities;
 4. Stresses that the best strategy for Bangladesh would be to prepare for national elections and a handover of power to an elected government, so as to facilitate the speediest possible return to full civilian rule;
 5. Expresses its shock about the arrest of Journalist Tasneem Khalil, prisoner of conscience, detained solely because of his activities as a journalist and human rights defender;
 6. Condemns arbitrary arrest, detention and torture, which are a significant problem in Bangladesh today;
 7. Stresses that the Bangladesh Government must respect international human rights standards as it enforces a curfew and seeks to police demonstrations;
 8. Stresses that anyone detained under the emergency regulations must be charged with a cognizable criminal offence or released;
 9. Needs governments' commitment to create a national human rights commission in accordance with the UN's Paris Principles on national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, which would be an important step;
 10. Stresses the fact that Bangladesh is an important partner of the European Union, which has made progress in its economic performance;
 11. Urges full EU support for Bangladesh once the democratisation process and the elections procedure have been put on the right track and opened to international monitoring;
 12. Calls on the Council and the Commission to monitor carefully the human rights situation, the political situation and press freedom in Bangladesh and to draw up programmes in the framework of EU-Bangladesh cooperation to promote freedom of the press and freedom of speech;
 13. Calls on the Commission to use its good offices with other donors and with the Bangladeshi Government to promote the adoption of effective measures in line with the

provisions of this resolution;

14. Calls for the EU Election Observation Mission to resume its activities as soon as this is feasible and advisable;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Caretaker Government of Bangladesh, the Election Commission of Bangladesh and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.