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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 Hanna Foltyn-Kubicka, Inese Vaidere, Marek Aleksander Czarnecki, Adam Bielan

on behalf of the UEN Group

on Bangladesh

European Parliament resolution on Bangladesh

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Bangladesh, in particular those of 14 April 2005 and 16 November 2006,
 - having regard to the statement of 17 July 2007 by the UN Secretary-General 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 Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the EU has long-standing good relations with Bangladesh, through the Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development,
- B. whereas violations of the freedom of press, including arrests and torture, have been observed involving journalists and media personnel covering protest demonstrations and mass riots,
- C. whereas, on 27 August 2007, the Supreme Court overturned a High Court order for the release on bail of the former Prime Minister and Awina league president Sheikh Hasina who has been imprisoned since 16 July 2007,
- D. whereas Sigma Huda, the UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, was sentenced on 27 August 2007 to three years' imprisonment and there are grounds for concerns about state of her health,
- E. whereas the general elections have been postponed to 2008 by the Caretaker Government,
1. Deplores recent restrictions on freedom of expression, arbitrary arrests and physical attacks against journalists, students, NGO staff, human rights activists and others, as well as allegedly reported ill-treatment and torture of detainees;
 2. Expresses its concerns about the arrest of Sheikh Hasina; calls on the Bangladeshi authorities to release Sheikh Hasina on bail so that she can prepare her defence, and to respect her right to a fair and impartial trial;
 3. Calls on the Bangladeshi authorities to ensure that Sigma Huda receives all the medical care she needs;
 4. Calls on the Bangladeshi Caretaker Government to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights by ensuring that all human rights defenders and activists in Bangladesh, carrying out their legitimate work in human rights, are able to operate without fear of reprisals and free of harassment;
 5. Emphasizes once again that Bangladesh has obligations under international law as a State Party to both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the United Nations Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

6. Asks the Council and the Commission to keep a watchful eye on the political and human rights situation in Bangladesh;
7. Calls for rapid, free and fair elections conducted in accordance with international standards and with the participation of all parties;
8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Governments and Parliaments of the Member States, the Caretaker Government of Bangladesh, the European Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

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