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## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on recent elections in Bangladesh  
(2014/2516(RSP))

**Jean Lambert, Barbara Lochbihler, Nicole Kiil-Nielsen, Raúl Romeva i Rueda, Tarja Cronberg, Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández**  
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

**European Parliament resolution on recent elections in Bangladesh  
(2014/2516(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

– having regard to European Parliament Resolutions on Bangladesh, notably of 21 November 2013 on Bangladesh: human rights and forthcoming elections, of 23 May 2013 on labour conditions and health and safety standards following the recent factory fires and building collapse in Bangladesh, of 14 March 2013 on the situation in Bangladesh, and of 17 January 2013 on recent casualties in textile factory fires, notably in Bangladesh

- having regard to the Declaration by the High Representative Catherine Ashton on behalf of the European Union on the Legislative Elections in Bangladesh of 9 January 2014 and the Statement of the EU High Representative on the preparation for general elections in Bangladesh 30 November 2013

- having regard to the statement by the Spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on EU Election Observation Mission in Bangladesh, 20 December 2013

- having regard to the press release of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, 1 December 2013, “Political brinkmanship driving Bangladesh to the edge”,

– having regard to Rule 122 of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. Whereas the 10th parliamentary elections took place on 5 January 2014 under the auspices of a so-called interim government headed by the past and present Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who had removed the traditional Bangladeshi system of a neutral caretaker government with the 15th amendment to the Constitution in 2011,
- B. Whereas the elections were boycotted by the opposition BNP/ Jamaat-e-Islami which insisted on a 'non-party' caretaker government, and resulted in an unsurprising, because largely uncontested, victory of the ruling Awami League with a low voter participation; whereas the Election Commission reportedly had to suspend election in over 300 polling stations due to violence,
- C. Whereas the pre-election and election phase have been marked by widespread aggression, blockages, strikes and voter intimidation mainly orchestrated by the opposition, which resulted in the death of dozens of people since November and has paralysed Bangladesh's fragile economy
- D. Whereas Bangladesh's two main parties have a longstanding tradition of uncompromising confrontation which risks jeopardising Bangladesh's impressive social and economic progress of the last decade
- E. Whereas the European Union did not send an election observation mission, because in absence of a credible opposition, the conditions for representative elections were not assembled

- F. Whereas a UN mission led by Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, which intended to broker a compromise, concluded the five-day visit on 5 October without achieving a break-through
  - G. Whereas the Awami League government has declared the elections free, fair and credible and whereas the new government under the old and new Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was sworn in
  - H. Whereas during and after the elections thousands of citizens belonging to minorities, particularly Hindus, have been violently attacked and chased from their homes mainly by Jammāt-e-Islāmī militants
  - I. Whereas the leader of the opposition Khaleda Zia, has been put under house arrest, other prominent members of the BNP have recently been arrested and numerous BNP supporters have reportedly been going into hiding for fear of reprisals
  - J. Whereas the BNP opposition continues its alliance with the Jamaat-e-Islami which is being considered the main instigator of the violence with arson and petrol bomb attacks and has been declared a terrorist group by numerous countries
  - K. Whereas on 12 December Abdul Quader Molla a prominent leader of the Jamaat-e-Islami was the first to be executed on charges of war crimes committed during Bangladesh's war of independence and whereas the International Crimes Tribunal proceedings have been a highly contested electoral issue with six out of the seven people found guilty of war crimes sentenced to death
1. Expresses its serious concern over the continuing violence and paralysis of everyday-life in Bangladesh through strikes and blockages and the confrontation between the two political camps;
  2. Sincerely regrets that the parliament and the political parties did not manage to agree on an inclusive mechanism for elections, and urgently calls on the government and the opposition to put the best interests of Bangladesh first and to find a compromise which would give a chance to the Bangladeshi people to express their democratic will in a representative and credible way; considers that all options should be considered, including an early election if all legitimate political parties are willing to stand and offer voters a choice;
  3. Considers that time might have come for a profound inner reform of the way parties function in order to end the decade-long political stand-off between Bangladesh's two main political movements and underlines that parties which take recourse to violence and terrorist acts should be banned; urges therefore the BNP to unequivocally take its distance to the Jamaat-e-Islami;
  4. appeals to all democratic parties and their political leaders to find a way forward that will enhance the democratic reputation of Bangladesh and to use the assistance of the UN, EU or other international bodies experienced in democratic development, calls on the EU to use all means at its disposal to assist such a process in case of request;
  4. Expresses its grave concern over the incidences of violence and the many casualties in recent months and calls on the Government of Bangladesh to immediately halt all repressive methods used by the security forces, indiscriminate firing with live ammunition and torture in custody, as well as to release arbitrarily arrested opposition politicians;

5. Recalls Bangladesh's reputation as a tolerant society, and calls for all instigators of inter-communal violence to be brought to justice;
6. Urgently appeals to all parties not to undermine Bangladesh's social and economic stability and its progress made notably on MDGs, disaster management, labour rights and women's empowerment;
7. Recognises that the International Crimes Tribunal has played an important role in providing redress for victims and those affected by the Bangladeshi war of independence;
8. Expresses however alarm over Bangladesh's increasing number of people on death row, apart the six ICT sentences, notably the sentencing of 152 soldiers to death over a bloody mutiny in 2009 and the recent execution of Abdul Quader Molla; calls on the Government and Parliament to repeal the death penalty and to commute all death sentences;
9. Calls equally on the government to revise the Information and Communication Technology Act and the Anti-Terrorism Act which have been further tightened under the last government and which can lead to arbitrary criminalisation of citizens;
10. Urges to carry out prompt, independent and transparent investigations into the recent cases of violent death before and after the elections and to bring the perpetrators, including in the security services to justice;
11. Is looking forward to Bangladesh fully cooperating with the UN Treaty Bodies and extending a standing invitation to the Special Procedures of the UN Human Rights Council;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, Commission, the European External Action Service, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Secretary General, the UN Human Rights Council and the Government and Parliament of Bangladesh.