



Plenary sitting

7.7.2015

B8-0708/2015

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 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on Bahrain, in particular the case of Nabeel Rajab
(2015/2758(RSP))

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on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

B8-0708/2015

European Parliament resolution on Bahrain, in particular the case of Nabeel Rajab (2015/2758(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions of 27 October 2011 on Bahrain, of 15 March 2012, 16 January 2013, 12 September 2013 and 4 February 2014 on human rights violations in Bahrain,
- having regard to its resolution of 24 March 2011 on European Union relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council,
- having regard to the visit of a delegation of its Subcommittee on Human Rights to Bahrain on 19 and 20 December 2012 and to the press statement issued by that delegation, having regard to the Arab Peninsula Delegation visit from 27 to 30 April 2013 and to its press statement;
- having regard to the statements by the former EU High Representative Catherine Ashton of 1 July 2013 on the occasion of her visit to Bahrain for the EU-GCC Ministerial meeting in Manama, Bahrain,
- having regard to the statements by the UN Secretary-General of 23 June 2011 and 30 September 2011 on the sentences imposed on 21 Bahraini political activists, human rights defenders and opposition leaders, having regard to the statement of the spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights of 6 August 2013;
- having regard to the opinions adopted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention at its sixty-sixth session, 29 April–3 May 2013 No. 12/2013 (Bahrain) concerning Nabeel Rajab;
- having regard to the MEPs letter to HR/VP Mogherini on human rights violations in Bahrain on 30 April 2015,
- having regard to the latest written statements from June 2015 submitted from several Foundations and NGO to the Secretary General of United Nations on the situation of abuses on human rights and violation of International human rights agreements in Bahrain,
- having regard to the report released by the BICI in November 2011 and to its follow-up,
- having regard to Articles 61, 84, 87, 134, 135 and 146 of Bahrain's Law of Criminal Procedure,
- having regard to the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the Arab Charter on Human Rights, to all of which Bahrain is a party,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the 2004 EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders, as updated in 2008,

- having regard to the 1949 Geneva Convention,
- having regard to Rules 135(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. Whereas Nabeel Rajab, President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, FIDH Deputy Secretary General and member of the Advisory Committee of Human Rights Watch's Middle East Division, has been under repeated arrests since July 2012.

B. Whereas as a prominent human rights defender Nabeel Rajab has faced continuous arbitrary detentions from 2012. Recently, on 2 April 2015 he was arrested again for "*disseminating false or malicious news, statements or rumours in time of war*" and for "*defamation of a statutory body*", serving a six-months prison and facing two other sets of criminal charges. Moreover, since this last arrest, it has been reported that Rajab has spent remarkable time in solitary confinement.

C. Whereas Nabeel Rajab, involved in other trials for previous tweets posted by September 2014, faces up to ten years in prison.

D. Whereas Nabeel Rajab's case represents a particular case of continuous arbitrary limitation of the right of freedom of expression, which is universal and shall be internationally guaranteed.

E. Whereas Nabeel Rajab dedicated his life to making Bahrain a better place for all through his work on human rights, including advocacy for women and children, national reconciliation, the exposure and eradication of torture and police violence, as well as freedom of expression.

F. Whereas Nabeel Rajab work for the rights of migrant workers, for the denouncement of torture practices in Bahrain and for promoting human rights and basic civil liberties in his country as well as in other Gulf countries, reflects his paramount commitment within human rights and social justice, without consideration of gender, religious creed, nationality or any other element.

G. Whereas, the situation of other human rights defenders who are subjected to judicial harassment should be also taken in consideration. In particular the following cases: Mahdi Abu Deeb - Head of Bahrain Teachers Association; Naji Fateel - Co-Founder of the Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights and blogger; Ghada Jamsheer - Head of the Women Petition Committee, author, blogger, and advocate for women's rights and freedom of religion; Hussain Jawad - Chairman of the European-Bahraini Organisation for Human Rights; Taïmoor Karimi - Lawyer; Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja - Co-Founder of President of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights; Zainab Al-Khawaja - Human rights blogger; Mohammed Al-Maskati - Former President of the Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights, Digital Security Consultant at Front Line Defenders; Sayed Ahmed Al-Wadaei - Director of Advocacy at the Bahrain Institute for Human Rights.

H. Whereas over four years ago the peaceful mobilization in Bahrain asking for democracy, social and labour rights, respect of human rights, for better living conditions and end to torture and corruption started; whereas this turmoil lead to a violent repression by police using tear gas and live and rubber bullets against protesters.

I. Whereas repression increased after the army intervened and with the invasion by Saudi Arabian troops; whereas on 15 March 2011 a three-month country-wide state of emergency was decreed; whereas so at least 45 people were killed, around 100 disappeared and thousands injured;

J. Whereas the Government of Bahrain had continued to arrest and charge protestors their rights to assembly, associations and expression, whereas during this time people were arrested for having supported, organised or taken part in the protest movement, or for denouncing the human rights violations committed by the authorities; whereas even children have been arrested and kept in adult detention unsuitable for minors, where they have reported been tortured and improperly treated; whereas the Bahrain criminal court revoked citizenship of 56 people, including 9 Children and making a total of citizenship revocations to 128 for 2015.

K. Whereas the judicial harassment against the head of the moderate Shiite opposition in Bahrain, Sheikh Ali Salman, recently sentenced to four years in prison, as well as the recently released Ibrahim Sharif, leader of the Sunni opposition, remain clear examples on the lack of fundamental human rights in the country, as for Nabeel Rajab's case.

L. Whereas Bahrain remains a place where migrant workers are facing exploitation in the country, in particular women as domestic workers; whereas the country remains a place repression towards peaceful demonstrators, trade unionists and other groups of professionals such as doctors.

M. Whereas four years after the start of the uprisings, the repression still continues; whereas human rights defenders and activists continue to be arrested and prosecuted, and reports of torture and ill-treatment continue; whereas many people are still disappeared after the hard repression that followed the Saudi military intervention in Bahrain.

N. Whereas Bahrain as a member of the international community must hold basic and fundamental human rights standards.

1. Firmly condemns the imprisonment of human rights defenders in the framework of the continuing violations of human rights in Bahrain.

2. Calls for the immediate release of the human rights defender Nabeel Rajab in prison for the fifth time in four years.

3. Demands to the Bahrain authorities the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners, human rights defenders and individuals detained and charged for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

4. Calls the Bahrain authorities for the need to ensure the rights of the defendants including by ensuring that they are presumed innocent and that the right to fair trial is guaranteed according to international standards.

5. Calls for an urgent cease of harassment against civil and political society, assuming that

Bahrain must hold basic and fundamental human rights as a member of the international society.

6. States the need to repeal the decisions revoking the citizenship of Bahraini citizens and put the legislative framework in accordance with international law.

7. Condemns the persisting repression in Bahrain that has led in the past to even dead people and thousands of injured ones and expresses its solidarity with the families of all the victims. Remarks at this respect the lack of improvement on the situation during the last years, and in particular the fact that no proper investigation has been carried out into killings by the security forces. For such reasons there is a paramount need to ensure effective and independent investigations into all human rights violations.

8. Is strongly concerned about the situation in Bahrain, especially the means used to silence the opposition, the allegations of tortures and treatment of the wounded; is concerned about the role played by the Gulf Cooperation Council and mainly of Saudi Arabia.

9. Remarks the fact that the latest legislative elections in Bahrain on November 2014 were boycotted by the opposition as the main opposition party was banned by October 2014.

10. Reiterates that demonstrators have expressed legitimate democratic aspirations and that their demands might be implemented.

11. Calls urgently on King Hamad and his government to stop violence, repression and detention of peaceful demonstrators; urges the authorities to act in strict accordance with their international and national obligations.

12. Is strongly concerned about the massive dismissals and arrests of workers, trade union activists and trade union leaders.

13. Remarks its particular concern on the situation of doctors and migrants workers.

14. Reaffirms its support to the struggle of the Bahrain working people and the demonstrators for better living conditions, for the end of corruption and for attaining democracy; insists that the future of Bahrain must firmly rest in the hands of the Bahraini people, without any external interference

15. Reiterates its call the for the full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, with special regard to the freedom of assembly and expression, freedom of religion, women's and LGBTI rights and gender equality, as well as fight against discrimination.

16. Calls on the Bahraini authorities to commute all death sentences in Bahrain; reiterates its strong opposition against the use of the death penalty and urges the Bahraini authorities to declare an immediate moratorium.

17. Calls for the establishment and effective implementation of an international monitoring mechanism with the mandate of United Nations and with consent of the parts for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) and of the UN Universal Periodic Review of Bahrain, including those related to human rights defenders; urges this new mechanism to conduct an impartial inquiry in order

to investigate committed breaches of human rights, including the cases of extrajudicial execution and arbitrary arrest, identify those responsible and where appropriate bring them to justice, with compensation for the victims and their families.

18. Condemns the double standard approach from the EU with respect to human rights issues, prevailing profitable economic and strategic interests over the citizen's rights, also under authoritarian governments.

19. Rejects the fact that the US recently decided to recall the military aid to Bahrain suspended since 2011 events and demonstrations, by arguing that the Government of Bahrain has made meaningful progress on human rights reforms and reconciliation.

20. Strongly criticises the intensive arms trade, as well as technologies trade used for activities resulting in human rights violations, of some EU Member States with various countries in the region. Calls in this respect on the Council to verify whether there have been breaches in the EU Code of Conduct in particular regarding arms export, and to adopt stringent measures so that this code is fully respected by all the Member States; calls for the suspension and ban exports of tear gas and crowd control material to Bahrain until investigations have been made as regards to their improper utilisation and until the perpetrators of such improper utilisation are held accountable;

21. Remarks with concern the weak EU response to the situation in Bahrain, further to several confirmations on the lack of freedom of expression and other essential rights. Thus, strongly reminds the need of supporting human rights standards for the entire Gulf region.

22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the UN Human Rights Council and the governments and parliaments of other States of the region.