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*Plenary sitting*

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**B8-0902/2016**

5.7.2016

## **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  
(2016/2808(RSP))

**Alyn Smith, Barbara Lochbihler, Michel Reimon, Ernest Urtasun, Heidi Hautala, Bodil Valero, Bronis Ropė, Davor Škrlec, Igor Šoltes, Maria Heubuch**

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

**B8-0902/2016**

**European Parliament resolution on Bahrain  
(2016/2808(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Bahrain, notably those of 9 July 2015 on the case of Nabeel Rajab and of 3 February 2016 on the case of Mohammed Ramadan,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines on the Death Penalty, on Torture, on Freedom of Expression and on Human Rights Defenders,
- having regard to the statement of 30 May 2016 by the Spokesperson of Vice-President/High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini on the sentencing of al-Wefaq Secretary General Ali Salman in Bahrain,
- having regard to the statement by the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression, David Kaye, on the sentencing of opposition leader Sheikh Ali al-Salman on 1 June, the statement by the spokesperson of the UN Secretary General on 16 June and the statement by the spokesperson of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on 21 June 2016, both on Bahrain,
- having regard to the new EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights, which aims to place the protection and promotion of human rights at the heart of all EU policies,
- having regard to the Bahraini Constitution adopted in February 2002, notably Chapter 3, the Article 364 of the Bahraini Penal Code and the Bahraini Citizenship Act 1963,
- having regard to the November 2011 report by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI),
- 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, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Arab Charter on Human Rights, to all of which Bahrain is a party,
- having regard to the new UN Women 'Princess Sabeeka Bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa Global Award for Women Empowerment' which was launched in June 2016, thanks to a donation by the Bahrain royal family
- having regard to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, particularly Article 15,
- having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas over the past month the government of Bahrain has intensified a campaign of

repression and persecution of human rights defenders and political opposition; whereas these attacks on peaceful dissent are unprecedented in scope and scale and have not been seen since the March-June 2011 period of martial law;

B. whereas on 13 June 2016 police re-arrested the prominent Human Rights defender Nabeel Rajab on expression-related charges and placed him in solitary confinement; whereas on 28 June Nabeel Rajab was transferred to hospital because of a deteriorating heart condition and other health issues;

C. whereas on 22 June 2016, Ghada Jamsheer, a writer, blogger and journalist who is President of the Women's Petition Committee (WPC), was sentenced on appeal to one year in prison for four cases related to her tweets about corruption at King Hamad hospital and whereas human rights activist Zainab Al-Khawaja went into exile after threats of re-arrest and indefinite detention; whereas the government imposed travel bans on a group of rights activists travelling to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva;

D. whereas fifty-three persons were stripped of Bahraini citizenship, including leading religious figure Sheikh Isa Qassim; whereas the majority of denaturalized persons were native Shia Bahrainis, punished under the terrorism laws for acts of protest;

E. whereas the Ministry of Justice has suspended Al Wefaq political society and is attempting to dissolve the organisation, the largest peaceful opposition movement in Bahrain, on the basis accusations of “foreign interference” and “promotion of violence and support to terrorist organisations”;

F. whereas Sheikh Ali Salman, the head of the Al-Wefaq opposition group, has been imprisoned since July 2015 without fair trial, his sentence even being extended on appeal in May 2016 from four years to nine in violation of the rights of the accused enshrined in Bahrain’s Constitution and in international law; whereas in September 2015 the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention had concluded that his detention was arbitrary;

G. whereas freedom of expression and freedom of assembly are indispensable pillars of a democratic and pluralistic society; whereas the Bahraini Constitution adopted in 2002 enshrines fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression and assembly;

H. whereas a number of internal bodies have been set up, following the 2011 protests and the conclusions of the BICI report, to monitor governmental abuses, however they are reporting directly to the governmental branches they are supposed to be monitoring; whereas this lack of independence fosters a culture of impunity that undermines attempts of democratic reform;

1. Expresses its grave concern over the on-going campaign of repression against human rights defenders, political opposition and civil society, as well as restrictions of fundamental democratic rights, notably the freedom of expression, association and assembly, political pluralism and rule of law in Bahrain; calls for an end to acts of violence, harassment, intimidation, including at judicial level, or censorship against human rights defenders, political opponents, peaceful protesters and civil society actors by the state authorities;

2. Calls on the Bahraini authorities to unconditionally release Nabeel Rajab and other human rights activists targeted solely for their human rights activities and sent to prison for

peacefully exercising their right to freedom of speech and expression; calls on the authorities to guarantee their physical and psychological integrity and to provide for all the necessary medical treatment;

3. Calls on Bahraini authorities to immediately lift the travel ban against human rights defenders and insists that authorities guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Bahrain are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities, nationally and internationally, without hindrance, intimidation or harassment.

4. Reminds the Bahraini government of its responsibility to ensure the security and safety of all citizens irrespective of their political views, affiliation or confession; insists that only building a truly pluralistic society, respectful of the diversity of views and lifestyles, can ensure a long-term stability and security in Bahrain and, in that regard, calls for the release of Sheikh Ali Salman and other activists;

5. Expresses strong concern about the suspension of Al-Wefaq contrary to the principles of democratic pluralism and believes that it might be harmful for the long-term stability of Bahrain; calls on the government to stop the persecution of the organization and create conditions conducive to the peaceful expression of dissent in the country;

6. Calls on the Bahraini authorities to ensure the full implementation of the 2002 Constitution and to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms guaranteed therein as well as the international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by Bahrain; in particular calls on the effective implementation of the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, the Universal Periodic Review and the national ombudsman in order to allow for an improvement of the human rights situation.

7. Appeals to the Bahraini authorities to restore Bahraini citizenship on those individuals who were unfairly stripped of it, such as Sheikh Isa Qassim and others who were punished in this way solely for exercising their freedom of expression;

8. Re-iterates its call on Bahrain to ratify of the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture; in this regard calls on the EU Member States to lead by example in all ratifying this protocol;

9. Expresses its concern over Bahrain's return to the practice of capital punishment and calls for the reintroduction of the moratorium on the death penalty;

10. Welcomes the measure to protect workers which have been introduced in the Bahraini Labor Law of 2012 and believes this can serve as example for other countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council to follow suit;

11. Commends Bahrain for generally respecting the rights of citizens and foreign residents to practice their religion; however calls on Bahraini authorities to live up to the country's constitution that stipulates that there shall be no discrimination in the rights and duties of citizens on grounds of religion and to end any discrimination of the Shia population;

12. Urges the HR/VP to continue to raise the concerns about attacks against freedom of

expression, association and peaceful assembly in Bahrain and other GCC countries, both on bilateral level and using such multilateral platforms as the upcoming EU-GCC ministerial meeting on July 20, 2016;

13. Strongly encourages the establishment of a EU-Bahrain human rights working group, but notes that an EU-Bahrain human rights dialogue cannot replace a thorough dialogue between government, opposition and civil society in Bahrain itself;

14. Calls again on the Government of Bahrain to cooperate with the UN special rapporteurs (notably on torture, freedom of assembly, independence of judges and lawyers, and human rights defenders) and issue a standing invitation in their favour;

13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council.