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*Plenary sitting*

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**B8-0906/2016**

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))

**Pier Antonio Panzeri, Victor Boștinăru, Knut Fleckenstein, Richard Howitt, Clara Eugenia Aguilera García, Eric Andrieu, Nikos Androulakis, Francisco Assis, Zigmantas Balčytis, Hugues Bayet, Brando Benifei, José Blanco López, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Simona Bonafè, Biljana Borzan, Soledad Cabezón Ruiz, Nicola Caputo, Andi Cristea, Miriam Dalli, Jonás Fernández, Monika Flašíková Beňová, Doru-Claudian Frunzuliță, Eider Gardiazabal Rubial, Enrico Gasbarra, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg, Neena Gill, Sylvie Guillaume, Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto, Anna Hedh, Cătălin Sorin Ivan, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Agnes Jongerius, Eva Kaili, Jeppe Kofod, Javi López, Krystyna Lybacka, Louis-Joseph Manscour, Costas Mavrides, Sorin Moisă, Alessia Maria Mosca, Victor Negrescu, Momchil Nekov, Vincent Peillon, Pina Picierno, Tonino Picula, Kati Piri, Miroslav Poche, Liliana Rodrigues, Inmaculada Rodríguez-Piñero Fernández, Daciana Octavia Sârbu, Tibor Szanyi, Paul Tang, Claudia Țapardel, Marc Tarabella, Marita Ulvskog, Elena Valenciano, Julie Ward, Flavio Zanonato, Damiano Zoffoli**  
on behalf of the S&D Group

**B8-0906/2016**

**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 surveillance 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 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 arrested the prominent Human Rights defender Nabeel Rajab on charges of “spreading false rumours in times of war” and “insulting public authorities” in relation to Twitter posts he published in 2015, which carry up to 13 years sentence together; whereas Nabeel Rajab previously served a two year prison sentence between 2012 and 2014 in relation to his exercise of free expression and assembly, and the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ruled in 2013 that he was arbitrarily detained,

C. Whereas, after 15 days in solitary confinement, Mr Rajab experienced poor imprisonment conditions that led to a deterioration of his health and a transfer to hospital on 27 June; whereas he was transferred back to prison on 29 June 2016, despite continuing health problems,

D. whereas the government forced Zainab Al-Khawaja into exile after threats of re-arrest and indefinite detention, and imposed travel bans on a group of rights activists travelling to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva;

E. Whereas Bahraini authorities continue to use revocation of citizenship as means of political repression, culminating in the recent denaturalisation of cleric Ayatollah Sheikh Isa Qassim, and whereas Bahraini authorities have stripped over 320 persons of citizenship, including human rights defenders, politicians, journalists, and senior religious authorities, rendering the majority of them stateless, in contravention of Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

F. Whereas Bahraini authorities suspended the Kingdom’s biggest political group, Al-Wefaq National Islamic Society on 14 June, froze its assets and took ownership of their headquarters, and have motioned for an expedited dissolution of the political society in July,

G. 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; whereas the lack of protections for an accused’s rights is in direct violation of the Bahrain’s national Constitution and of international law; whereas in September 2015 the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention had concluded that his detention was arbitrary;

H. 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;

I. whereas a number of internal bodies have been set up since the 2011 protests and following the conclusions of the BICI report to monitor governmental abuses, however they are largely ineffectual and reporting directly to the governmental branches they are supposed to be

monitoring; whereas the lack of independence of these bodies reportedly causes a lack of accountability within governmental branches and security forces, which fosters a culture of impunity that undermines any attempts of democratic reform;

1. Condemns 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 all acts of violence, harassment, intimidation, including at judicial level, or censorship against human rights defenders, political opponents, peaceful protesters and civil society actors by state authorities, security forces and services;

2. Calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Nabeel Rajab and other human rights defenders jailed over allegations related to their rights to free expression, assembly, and association, in addition to the dropping of all charges against them;

3. Condemns the imposition of travel bans on the delegation of human rights activists on their way to attend the 32<sup>nd</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva and calls for the government to lift them; underlines that it is unacceptable that representatives of civil society and media be prevented from participating in the work of international bodies and insists that the Bahraini authorities respect the fundamental human and political rights of the representatives of Bahraini civil society;

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 currently being held arbitrarily in Bahraini prisons.

5. Notes with concern the Bahraini government's suppression of legitimate political opposition, including the increase of Sheikh Ali Salman's sentence and the suspension and freezing of assets of the Al-Wefaq National Islamic Society; insists on the immediate halt of the suppression of different political opinions in the country and their leading representatives, regardless of their political or religious affiliation;

6. Expresses particular concern over the misuse of anti-terrorism laws in Bahrain and, especially, revocation of nationality as means of political pressure and punishment; strongly calls on the Bahraini authorities to revoke the decision to denationalise Ayatollah Sheikh Issa Qassim;

7. 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 a human rights institution in order to allow for an improvement of the human rights situation.

8. Calls on Bahraini authorities to ratify of the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture;

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 workers protections enshrined in Bahraini Labour Law of 2012 and believes it to be an evidence that worker protective regulations can succeed in GCC countries;

11. Commends Bahrain for generally respecting the right of citizens and foreign residents to practice their religion; 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. Calls on the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, European External Action Service, Members of the European Parliament and Member States to continuously raise the importance of the respect for human rights and condemn the misuse of anti-terrorism laws and revocation of citizenship as means of political oppression; insists that these issues be put forward clearly and publicly as conditions for any further development of EU-Bahraini relations;

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. Encourages 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.

15. 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.