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*Plenary sitting*

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**B8-0259/2018**

29.5.2018

## **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 women's rights defenders in Saudi Arabia  
(2018/2712(RSP))

**Charles Tannock, Karol Karski, Raffaele Fitto, Monica Macovei,  
Valdemar Tomaševski, Notis Marias, Jadwiga Wiśniewska**  
on behalf of the ECR Group

**B8-0259/2018**

**European Parliament resolution on women's rights defenders in Saudi Arabia  
(2018/2712(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Saudi Arabia;
- having regard to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- having regard to the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- having regard to the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- having regard to the Arab Charter on Human Rights, ratified by Saudi Arabia in 2009;
- having regard to Rule 123 of its Rules of Procedure;

A. whereas since 15 May 2018 reportedly at least 11 prominent women's and human rights activists have been arrested;

B. whereas Saudi authorities claim the arrests were made after the authorities monitored their coordinated activities, which included suspicious communication with third parties, including foreign officials with the aim of supporting their activities, recruiting persons working in sensitive government positions and resulting the leaking of classified documents, and providing financial support to hostile elements abroad with the aim of undermining the security and stability of Saudi Arabia;

C. whereas the investigation and work on the case is still ongoing and information on the arrests is difficult to come by due to limited information released by the Saudi authorities;

D. whereas five activists have been reportedly been released however the conditions for their release have not been made public;

E. whereas the recent wave of arrests of women's rights activists seem to go counter and may distract from the reform agenda Vision 2030 and recent greater freedoms for women and men in the Kingdom;

F. whereas the driving ban for women in Saudi Arabia is to be lifted on 24 June 2018;

G. whereas the guardianship framework still applies to Saudi women which severely restricts their rights and freedoms, despite recent positive changes to the system;

H. whereas international concerns have repeatedly been raised about access to justice, women's rights, and restrictions on freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of religion or belief in the Kingdom;

I. whereas Saudi Arabia is an influential, important and key actor within the Middle East and North Africa region, with a close relationship to countries around the world, including in the European Union;

1. Condemns the recent arrests of the human and women's rights activists in the Kingdom and expresses concern about the reports that they are held incommunicado;
2. Requests the Saudi authorities to make public all the names of those arrested, to ensure their rights and well-being are strictly upheld while in prison and to cease the public smear campaign against them;
3. Welcomes the release of Loujain Hathloul, Madiha al-Ajrourh, Hessah Al-Sheikh, Aisha al-Manea and Wala'a al-Shubbar;
4. Welcomes the proposals set out by the leadership of Saudi Arabia in its Vision 2030 and notes its aims in the wider context of the reform agenda aimed at offering greater freedom for its citizens; welcomes in this regard the lifting of the driving ban for women inside the Kingdom;
4. Welcomes the recent changes to the guardianship system for Saudi women and calls on the Saudi authorities to abolish the guardianship system in its entirety;
5. Urges the Saudi authorities to unconditionally release Raif Badawi, Essam Koshak, Waleed Abu al-Khair, Abdulaziz al-Shubaily and Mohammed al-Qahtani as part of the larger reform agenda in the Kingdom;
6. Notes that while the process of judicial reform in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia seeks to strengthen the protection of individual rights, it still is not in line with accepted international standards;
7. Urges further significant institutional change in Saudi Arabia to protect the human rights of its residents and allow for greater freedoms;
8. Calls for an enhanced mechanism for dialogue with Saudi Arabia on human rights issues and an exchange of expertise on justice and legal matters in order to strengthen the protection of individual rights in the Kingdom;
9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the EEAS, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz, the Secretary General of the United Nations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Speaker of the Majlis as-Shura.