

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Session document

25.4.2007

B6-0159/2007 }
B6-0161/2007 }
B6-0174/2007 }
B6-0177/2007 }
B6-0180/2007 }
B6-0184/2007 } RC1

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 115(5) of the Rules of Procedure, by

- Ioannis Kasoulides, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Simon Coveney, Charles Tannock, John Bowis, Frieda Brepoels and Eija-Riitta Korhola, on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
- Richard Howitt, Pasqualina Napoletano, Elena Valenciano Martínez-Orozco, Thijs Berman and Panagiotis Beglitis, on behalf of the PSE Group
- Elizabeth Lynne, Chris Davies, Sarah Ludford and Marios Matsakis, on behalf of the ALDE Group
- Brian Crowley, Konrad Szymański and Gintaras Didžiokas, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
- Margrete Auken, Jill Evans and Caroline Lucas, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
- Francis Wurtz, Luisa Morgantini and André Brie, on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

replacing the motions by the following groups:

- UEN (B6-0159/2007)
- PSE (B6-0161/2007)
- ALDE (B6-0174/2007)
- GUE/NGL (B6-0177/2007)
- Verts/ALE (B6-0180/2007)
- PPE-DE (B6-0184/2007)

on the case of the BBC journalist Alan Johnston

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PE 387.134v01-00}
PE 387.136v01-00}
PE 389.440v01-00}
PE 389.443v01-00}
PE 389.446v01-00}
PE 389.450v01-00} RC1

European Parliament resolution on the case of the BBC journalist Alan Johnston

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas BBC journalist Alan Johnston was abducted at gunpoint on 12 March 2007 whilst returning home in Gaza City and his whereabouts have remained unknown since that date,
- B. whereas Mr Johnston has remained in Gaza for the past three years during a period of increased violence, precisely to report on what is happening in Gaza to the outside world,
- C. whereas the Palestinian media community, public and politicians from all sides have condemned the kidnapping and are calling for his immediate release and an end to all kidnapping, proving the extent to which his work is appreciated by the local population,
- D. whereas President Abbas has confirmed publicly that there is credible evidence that Mr Johnston is alive, that he is being held in secure conditions and that there is information as to which group is holding him,
- E. whereas no group has claimed responsibility for Alan Johnston's abduction, which has been condemned by President Mahmoud Abbas and all the heads of the leading Palestinian movements,
- F. whereas, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, Reporters Without Borders and the International Federation of Journalists, 15 foreign journalists have been kidnapped in the Gaza Strip since August 2005, and thousands of journalists around the world face the threat of kidnapping, violence and intimidation on a daily basis,
- G. whereas the BBC retains a justified reputation as one of the world's leading broadcasters, upholding the values of impartiality, objectivity and fairness in its reporting,
- H. whereas press freedom is of primary importance for democracy and respect for humans rights and fundamental freedoms, given its essential role in guaranteeing free expression of opinions and ideas and in contributing to people's effective participation in democratic processes,
- 1. Calls for Alan Johnston to be immediately and unconditionally released unharmed and returned to safety;
- 2. Expresses its warm support for Mr Johnston's family in these difficult circumstances, and for his BBC colleagues and management, who have been campaigning tirelessly to build public and political support for his release;
- 3. Pays tribute to Mr Johnston's record as a journalist of the highest integrity, with a record of sixteen years working for the BBC and, in particular, the past three years spent in Gaza,

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where he has been the only permanently based foreign journalist from a major media organisation;

4. Expresses solidarity with the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and its member unions, including the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate, in their efforts to secure Mr Johnston's release and their campaign for a new global commitment to ending threats to independent journalism; recalls in this regard the appeal delivered by the IFJ to the leaders of the Palestinian Authority on 19 April, with the signatures of 197 Members of the European Parliament;
5. Calls on the Palestinian Authority to redouble its efforts to secure Mr Johnston's speedy release, to ensure that journalists in Gaza are able to carry out their duties free from the threat of kidnap and harassment and to ensure that all attacks against journalists and other civilians are investigated thoroughly and those responsible brought to justice;
6. Calls on the European Commission Technical Assistance Office to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, diplomatic representatives of EU Member States and the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) to strengthen and coordinate their efforts to secure Mr Johnston's release and support the Palestinian Authority's efforts in this regard;
7. Condemns this and all other acts of violence and intimidation against the free exercise of journalism and freedom of expression; stresses that the safety of journalists must be treated as a priority by all those attached to an open and democratic society and to progress towards peace everywhere, in line with the unanimously agreed resolution of the United Nations Security Council adopted on 23 December 2006;
8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative for the CFSP, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the President of the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian Legislative Council and the UN Secretary-General.