



Plenary sitting

B8-0252/2017 }
B8-0254/2017 }
B8-0255/2017 }
B8-0257/2017 }
B8-0262/2017 }
B8-0264/2017 } RC1

5.4.2017

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of the Rules of Procedure

replacing the motions by the following groups:

EFDD (B8-0252/2017)
S&D (B8-0254/2017)
Verts/ALE (B8-0255/2017)
ECR (B8-0257/2017)
ALDE (B8-0262/2017)
PPE (B8-0264/2017)

on Bangladesh, including child marriages
(2017/2648(RSP))

**Cristian Dan Preda, Tomáš Zdechovský, Elmar Brok, Deirdre Clune,
Pavel Svoboda, Laima Liucija Andrikiienė, Brian Hayes, Jaromír Štětina,
Stanislav Polčák, Ivan Štefanec, Therese Comodini Cachia, Tunne Kelam,
József Nagy, Sven Schulze, Lefteris Christoforou, Dubravka Šuica, Ivana
Maletić, Romana Tomc, Giovanni La Via, Patricija Šulin, Csaba Sógor,
Marijana Petir, Luděk Niedermayer, David McAllister, Željana Zovko,
Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski, Adam Szejnfeld, Elisabetta Gardini,
Michaela Šojdrová, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Milan Zver, Krzysztof
Hetman, Ivo Belet, José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Lars
Adaktusson, László Tóké, Eva Maydell, Elżbieta Katarzyna**

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Łukacijewska, Jiří Pospíšil, Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Andrey Kovatchev

on behalf of the PPE Group

Elena Valenciano, Victor Boştinaru, Soraya Post, Neena Gill, Karoline Graswander-Hainz

on behalf of the S&D Group

Urszula Krupa, Anna Elżbieta Fotyga, Geoffrey Van Orden, Raffaele Fitto, Angel Dzhambazki, Notis Marias, Tomasz Piotr Poręba, Ryszard Antoni Legutko, Ryszard Czarnecki, Karol Karski, Charles Tannock

on behalf of the ECR Group

Dita Charanzová, Johannes Cornelis van Baalen, Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Petras Auštrevičius, Urmas Paet, Marian Harkin, Louis Michel, Ivan Jakovčić, Marielle de Sarnez, Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruiz, Jozo Radoš, Hilde Vautmans, Pavel Telička, Frédérique Ries, Marietje Schaake, Gérard Deprez, Carolina Punset, Nathalie Griesbeck, Petr Ježek, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Cecilia Wikström, Martina Dlabajová, Ramon Tremosa i Balcells, Paavo Väyrynen, Nedzhmi Ali, Hannu Takkula, Valentinas Mazuronis, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Jasenko Selimovic, Filiz Hyusmenova, Charles Goerens

on behalf of the ALDE Group

Barbara Lochbihler, Terry Reintke, Ulrike Lunacek

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Ignazio Corrao, Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Rosa D'Amato, Isabella Adinolfi, Rolandas Paksas

on behalf of the EFDD Group

Barbara Kappel

European Parliament resolution on Bangladesh, including child marriages (2017/2648(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Bangladesh, in particular that of 18 September 2014 on human rights violations in Bangladesh¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 March 2017 on EU priorities for the UN Human Rights Council sessions in 2017²,
- having regard to the concluding observations of the UN Human Rights Committee of 22 March 2017 on Bangladesh,
- having regard to the resolution of the UN Human Rights Council of 2 July 2015 on strengthening efforts to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child, adopted by the Council on 6 March 2017,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),
- having regard to the 1995 Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) arising from the Fourth World Conference on Women and signed by Bangladesh, and to the periodic reviews of the progress of its implementation in Bangladesh conducted in 2000, 2005, 2009 and 2014,
- having regard to Article 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,
- having regard to the Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and Bangladesh on Partnership and Development of 2001,
- having regard to Bangladesh's Child Marriage Restraint Act of 11 March 2017 and Child Marriage Prevention Act of 15 September 2014,
- having regard to the Bangladesh National Action Plan to Eliminate Child Marriage 2015-2021,
- having regard to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the EU has long-standing relations with Bangladesh, including through the

¹ OJ C 234, 28.6.2016, p. 10.

² Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0089.

Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development; whereas respect for and promotion of human rights and democratic principles underpin the domestic and international policies of the parties and must be an essential part of EU external action;

- B. whereas in recent months NGOs and independent media have reported a series of human rights violations, including enforced disappearances, a clampdown on civil society, attacks on political activists and torture;
- C. whereas, according to recent UN data, Bangladesh continues to have one of the world's highest rates of child marriage, and the highest rate in Asia; whereas 52 % of girls in Bangladesh are married by the time they reach the age of 18 and 18 % by the time they reach 15;
- D. whereas the UN recognises child marriage as a violation of human rights in which children lack the choice or capacity to give their full consent and are often subject to psychological and physical risks;
- E. whereas Bangladesh is one of the 12 target countries of the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage, which is supported by the EU;
- F. whereas Bangladesh is a member of the South Asian Initiative to End Violence Against Children, which has adopted a regional action plan to end child marriage;
- G. whereas the Government of Bangladesh pledged at the Girl Summit of July 2014 to reduce by one third the number of girls marrying between the ages of 15 and 18 by 2021, to eliminate marriages involving children under 15 by 2021, and to end marriages of children under the age of 18 by 2041;
- H. whereas in 2015 Bangladesh was ranked 119th out of 159 countries surveyed on the Gender Inequality Index within the UN Development Programme;
- I. whereas on 27 February 2017 the Government of Bangladesh passed the Child Marriage Restraint Act, which – while keeping the minimum age of marriage at 18 for women and 21 for men – introduces exceptions in 'special cases' or for the 'best interests' of the adolescent with the permission of the courts, while failing to define such criteria or lay down a minimum age for such marriages; whereas the consent of the child is not required; whereas the law came into effect after approval by the President on 11 March 2017;
- J. whereas this law could lead to an escalation of dowry abuse, sexual harassment, rapes, and acid attacks and the legitimisation of statutory rape; whereas it could also allow parents to force their daughters to marry their rapists;
- K. whereas the EU guidelines for the promotion and protection of the rights of the child reaffirm the commitment of the EU to the comprehensive protection and promotion of children's rights in its external human rights policy;

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1. Reaffirms its condemnation of all cases of forced and child marriage and sexual violence against women and girls throughout the world;
2. Notes the progress which had been made by Bangladesh in efforts to reduce the levels of child marriage;
3. Welcomes the fact that in the past few years Bangladesh has adopted several legislative and institutional measures with the aim of protecting children; is concerned nevertheless at the insufficient or non-existent implementation of these measures;
4. Strongly regrets the adoption of the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 2017 and the loopholes contained in that legislation which provide legal authorisation for child marriage; further regrets the absence of legal criteria in the Act, which raises the risk of potential widespread abuse;
5. Calls on the Government of Bangladesh to amend the Act so as to close the loopholes and outlaw all marriages involving children;
6. Insists that until such time as the loopholes in the Act are removed, the Government of Bangladesh must adopt clear criteria against which the courts, in conjunction with health and social care professionals and including an interview with the girl concerned without the presence of family members, must base any decision to authorise an underage marriage;
7. Notes with concern that the recently adopted Act is a step backwards for Bangladesh in its efforts to eliminate child marriage; recalls that this relaxation of the law undermines the Bangladesh Government's own targets for the reduction of child marriage;
8. Recognises the impact child marriage can have, including restricting access to education, isolation, poverty, economic dependence and servitude, particularly for girls in rural areas, and notes with concern the increased risks of rape, physical violence and forced pregnancy in child marriages;
9. Notes that child marriage is often a consequence of unwanted and underage pregnancies; recalls in this regard the importance of providing women and girls with access to information on sexual and reproductive health, assistance and safe medical treatment;
10. Calls on the Government of Bangladesh to resume development of the National Action Plan to Eliminate Child Marriage 2015-2021, and to explain how it plans to reach its targets and eliminate all child marriage;
11. Calls on the Bangladesh authorities to effectively commit to the achievement of the recently internationally adopted Sustainable Development Goals, especially in order to reduce inequalities and ensure gender equality and women's rights;
12. Considers that child marriage can be effectively tackled through the promotion of human rights and human dignity and public social policies; calls, therefore, on the

Bangladesh authorities to systematically involve communities and civil society, including NGOs and children's organisations, to tackle the root causes of child marriage in Bangladesh, and to raise awareness in schools;

13. Calls in this regard on the Bangladesh authorities to amend the Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Act of 2014 in order to ensure that the work of civil society organisations is not subject to arbitrary control by the government, and that all decisions made under that Act are subject to an independent review process;
14. Urges the Bangladesh authorities to condemn the continuing horrendous acts against freedom of expression and to act to put an immediate end to all acts of violence, harassment, intimidation and censorship against journalists, bloggers and civil society: further urges the Bangladesh authorities to conduct independent investigations into the extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and excessive use of force, and to bring those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
15. Calls on the Commission and the EU Delegation in Bangladesh to raise these issues with the Bangladesh authorities, and on the European External Action Service to raise the issue of the Act at the next EU-Bangladesh Joint Commission meeting;
16. Calls for the EU to use all available instruments to support the Government of Bangladesh in respecting its international human rights obligations;
17. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the European External Action Service, the European Commission, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, and the Government and Parliament of Bangladesh.