



Plenary sitting

B8-0280/2018 }
B8-0284/2018 } RC1

13.6.2018

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

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

replacing the following motions:

B8-0280/2018 (ECR)

B8-0284/2018 (PPE)

on the human rights situation in Bahrain, notably the case of Nabeel Rajab
(2018/2755(RSP))

Tomáš Zdechovský

on behalf of the PPE

Charles Tannock, Karol Karski

on behalf of the ECR

European Parliament resolution on the human rights situation in Bahrain, notably the case of Nabeel Rajab (2018/2755(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Kingdom of Bahrain,
- having regard to the Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) of 1988,
- having regard to the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2016, adopted by the Council on 16 October 2017,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders, on human rights dialogues with third countries, and on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline,
- having regard to the Chaillot Prize for the Promotion of Human Rights in the GCC region,
- having regard to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
- having regard to the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and 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 Bahrain in 2013,
- having regard to the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) established by Royal Order to investigate and report on the events that took place in Bahrain from February 2011 and the consequences of those events,
- having regard to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas on 5 June 2018 the Bahrain Court of Appeal decided to uphold a five-year prison sentence imposed last 21 February on the leading human rights activist Nabeel Rajab for comments on Twitter condemning the air strikes in Yemen mounted by the Saudi-led coalition and exposing the alleged torture occurring in Bahrain's Jau prison; whereas under the Bahraini Penal Code these statements are considered criminal acts for 'insulting a neighbouring country' (Article 215), 'insulting national institutions' (Article 216) and deliberately announcing 'in wartime false or malicious news, statements or rumors ... to cause damage to military preparations for defending the State of Bahrain' (Article 133);

B. whereas Nabeel Rajab was already convicted to 2 years imprisonment in July 2017, after a procedure in absentia, and faces a total of 7 years imprisonment; whereas he was arbitrarily detained on 13 June 2016, and spent more than a year in pre-trial detention, his case having been postponed up to 20 times and the Court violating criminal procedure law on several occasions by announcing the holding of the trial with only a few days' notice, without explanation to his lawyers, who were therefore unable to prepare his defence or call their witnesses to testify in court;

C. whereas Nabeel Rajab was first arrested in 2012 on charges which included inciting protests against the government, and was sentenced to three years in prison; whereas in

November 2014 he was released on bail, but was re-arrested in April 2015 for criticising Bahrain on social media and given a six-month prison sentence; whereas he was granted a Royal pardon after concerns about his deteriorating health condition;

- D. whereas the EU has consistently engaged with the Bahraini authorities on human rights concerns in the Kingdom, while advising against measures that could undermine the stability of the country;
 - E. whereas the EU considers close cooperation with civil society and human rights defenders (HRDs) in third countries to be one of its main priorities in advancing human rights and tackling human rights violations;
 - F. whereas political work in the Kingdom of Bahrain is central to the democratic transition and support for comprehensive reforms;
 - G. whereas Bahrain is a key ally of the European Union in the Arabian Gulf, including in areas of political and economic relations, energy and security; whereas the stability of the Arabian Gulf region is of strategic interest to NATO and there is a mutual interest in further deepening the partnership so as to better respond to future security challenges;
 - H. whereas the Kingdom of Bahrain is an Arab state with a rich history of longstanding openness to other cultures around the world and in which Bahraini identity is central to its national identity;
1. Expresses concern about the five-year sentence handed down by the Higher Criminal Court of Bahrain in addition to the two-year sentence given in July 2017; takes note of the decision taken by the Bahrain High Court of Appeal to uphold Nabeel Rajab's five-year prison sentence and recognises that an appeal can still be granted by Bahrain's Court of Cassation or a Royal pardon granted by King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa; calls on the Bahraini authorities to ensure that trials comply with international law on fair trial and due process;
 2. Calls on the Bahraini authorities to ensure that Nabeel Rajab is not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment and has regular access to his family, lawyers of his choice and adequate healthcare;
 3. Renews its call on the Bahraini authorities to refrain from all torture, cruel and degrading treatment of detainees, to investigate cases of torture and to bring perpetrators to justice; supports in this regard the Kingdom's establishment of the Ministry of Interior Ombudsman, the Prisoners and Detainees Rights Commission and the Special Investigation Unit to safeguard human rights and provide independent oversight of police behaviour and detention standards; recognises that these were the first of their kind in the region and remain unique in the Gulf;
 4. Continues to support the Government of Bahrain's reform agenda and encourages the Government of Bahrain to aim for stability through further reforms and inclusive reconciliation in an environment where peaceful political grievances can be expressed freely, in line with the Kingdom's international obligations, especially in light of the upcoming elections scheduled for October 2018;
 5. Welcomes the Government's commitments to continue to improve the rights and opportunities available to all Bahrainis; supports the Kingdom's commitment to ensuring

an inclusive pluralistic society; welcomes in this regard Bahrain's model of religious tolerance and moderation and its cultural diversity, and takes positive note of the Bahraini constitution and the National Action Charter;

6. Attaches great importance to Bahrain's sovereignty and territorial integrity and stresses the importance of non-interference in Bahrain's internal affairs by forces seeking to subvert the stability and security of the Kingdom;
7. Requests that the Bahraini authorities allow a delegation of Members of the European Parliament to visit the country in order to meet with public authorities and civil society representatives and help gain a better understanding of the views and concerns of all parties;
8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, 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, the Government and Parliament of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council.