**Wajid Khan (S&D).** – Mr President, Bangladesh is approaching general elections under the worst circumstances. The government has embarked on a campaign of intrusive surveillance upon its own citizens. It is monitoring social media and curtailing freedom of expression in the name of national security. The Digital Security Act has gagged the media and all those who criticise the government and the harassment and intimidation of journalists and activists grows on a daily basis.

Peaceful political dissent should not be silenced or criminalised. We urge the government to revise the Digital Security Act, halt the crackdown on freedom of expression and conduct investigations into the cases of enforced disappearances. We want Bangladesh to progress towards a functioning democracy, not drift into an authoritarian police state.

*(Applause in some quarters)*