



Plenary sitting

7.7.2015

B8-0706/2015

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 Bahrain, in particular the case of Nabeel Rajab
(2015/2758(RSP))

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on behalf of the PPE Group

B8-0706/2015

European Parliament resolution on Bahrain, in particular the case of Nabeel Rajab (2015/2758(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, and in particular article 18 thereto,
 - having regard to the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of Child and the Arab Charter on Human Rights, to all of which Bahrain is a party,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Bahrain, and in particular those of 17 January 2013, 12 September 2013, and 6 February 2014;
 - having regard to the statements made by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) on Bahrain including the EEAS statement of 17 June 2015 on the sentencing of Sheikh Ali Al-Salman, leader of Bahrain's main opposition party Al Wefaq,
 - having regard to the visit of Stavros Lambrinidis, EU Special Representative for Human Rights, visited Bahrain in the end of May 2015,
 - having regard to its resolution of 13 June 2013 on the freedom of the press and media in the world,
 - having regard to the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders of 2004, as updated in 2008,
 - having regard to the statement by the Spokesperson of the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) on Bahrain of 16 January 2014,
 - having regard to the 23rd EU-GCC Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting, held in Manama, Bahrain, on 30 June 2013,
 - having regard to the decision of the Arab League's Ministerial Council, meeting in Cairo on 1 September 2013, to set up a pan-Arab court of human rights in Bahrain's capital Manama,
 - having regard to the Arab Peninsula delegation visit from 27 to 30 April 2013 and its press statement,
 - having regard to Rule 135 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Nabeel Rajab, the President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) and deputy secretary general of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), was arrested in October 2014 on charges related to a series of tweets in which he accused the Bahraini security forces of cooperating with the Islamic state; and was sentenced to six

months in prison on 20 January 2015 for “publicly insulting official institutions”;

- B. whereas Nabeel Rajab was arrested again on April 2, 2015 on new charges related to insulting a statutory body i.e. for reporting torture allegations in Jaw prison after a prison strike on 10 March, and spreading rumours during wartime;
 - C. whereas his detention was renewed several times by the Public Prosecutors, most recently on 11th May; and whereas if convicted of these charges he could face up to 10 years in prison;
 - D. whereas like Nabeel Rajab, many human rights defenders are detained or subjected to judicial harassment in Bahrain according to NGOs reporting;
 - E. whereas, following the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) report, the Bahraini authorities committed themselves to undergoing reforms; whereas progress has been made in overhauling the legal and law enforcement systems;
 - F. whereas Bahrain hosts the permanent headquarters of the Arab Human Rights Court following its approval at an Arab League meeting in Cairo;
 - G. Whereas the Interior Ministry Ombudsman and the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR), Bahrain's main rights watchdog, were awarded the prestigious 2014 Chaillot Prize for the Promotion of Human Rights in the GCC region;
 - H. whereas the situation in Bahrain is being dealt with in the ongoing 29th session of the UN Human Rights Council from 15 June to 3 July;
1. Calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Nabeel Rajab, and other prisoners of conscience who have been detained for exercising their rights to peaceful assembly, expression and association; strongly urge the Government of Bahrain to abide by its commitment to the protection of freedom of expression;
 2. Calls on the Bahrain authorities to drop the new charges against Nabeel Rajab as they related solely to the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression; and to repeal any legislation that criminalize the peaceful exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly;
 3. Expresses its full support to independent human rights organisations in Bahrain and to Bahraini human rights defenders; Calls on the Bahraini authorities to cooperate with international and foreign NGOs and to ensure their unhindered access to the country to promote human rights;
 4. Recognises the efforts that have been undertaken by the Bahraini authorities in implementing the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) from 2011 and of the UN Universal Periodic Review of Bahrain (UPR) as well as other UN mechanisms' recommendations and the recent release of a number of prisoners charged with crimes related to their political association and expression; calls for the implementation of BICI recommendations and for human rights and fundamental freedoms to be fully respected and properly monitored;

5. Notes the Bahraini Government's continuous efforts to reform the penal code and legal procedures with a view to abolishing the death penalty, and encourages this process to be duly pursued; calls on the Government of Bahrain to take all necessary steps to ensure the rights of the defendants, their right to fair trial, to guarantee due process, and the independence and impartiality of the judiciary in, and to ensure that it acts in full accordance with international human rights standards;
6. Calls on the Bahraini authorities to pursue the national consensus dialogue with a view to a lasting and inclusive national reconciliation; notes that in a sustainable political process, legitimate and peaceful criticisms should be expressed freely;
7. Takes note of the recommendations made by the Ombudsman, the Prisoners' and Detainees' Rights Commission (PDRC) and the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR), in particular on the rights of detainees and their conditions in prisons, including regarding alleged ill-treatment and torture; Encouraged those bodies to pursue their work in an independent, impartial and transparent manner and calls on the Bahraini authorities to fully implement these recommendations;
8. Strongly encourages the establishment of a EU-Bahrain human rights working group;
9. Stressed the importance of pursuing cooperation support given to Bahrain in particular for its judicial system and to reshape this support when needed to reach international human rights standards;
10. Instructs its president to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the government and parliaments of the Member States, and the Government and Parliament of the Kingdom of Bahrain.