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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for the debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 115 of the Rules of Procedure

by Raül Romeva i Rueda, Hiltrud Breyer, Jill Evans

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

on Saudia Arabia

European Parliament resolution on Saudia Arabia

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolution on Saudi Arabia of 18 January 1996 and 10 March 2005,
 - having regard to the ratification in October 2004 by Saudi Arabia of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW),
 - having regard of the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, ratified by Saudi Arabia,
 - having regard to Rule 115 (5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Saudi Arabia was elected to a seat on the new UN Human Rights Council in May,
- B. whereas in November 2006 a 19-year old victim of gang rape, known as the 'girl of al-Qatif', was sentenced to 90 lashes for a khilwa offence, for being in the company of a member of the opposite sex who is not a close relative at the time when she was attacked,
- C. deeply concerned by the fact that on 14 November 2007 the General Court of Qatif (Saudi Arabia) even increased her sentence to six months in prison and 200 lashes, more than double its October 2006 sentence, after its earlier verdict was reviewed by Saudi Arabia's highest court, the Supreme Council of the Judiciary because she had spoken out in public about her case and her efforts to seek justice,
- D. whereas Judge Al-Muhana of the General Court of Qatif banned the victim's lawyer Abdul Rahman Al-Lahem from the courtroom and from any future representation of his client,
- E. whereas M Al-Lahem, who has already spend time in prison for raising human rights cases with the Arabic media, now faces a disciplinary hearing at the Ministry of Justice on the grounds of "disobeying the rules and regulations" of the judiciary, which could lead to his disbarment from the legal profession,
- F. whereas Mr. Al-Lahem also defended the case of the couple Fatimeh and Mansour Al-Taimani, the parents of two children who were forcibly divorced in July 2007 at the request of the wife's brother, on the grounds that Fatimah's tribal lineage was superior to that of her husband,

- G. whereas both Fatimeh and Mansour Al-Timani have been incarcerated for days and even months together with their children for their refusal to accept the divorce and whereas Fatimeh has been obliged to live in a shelter since the divorce because she refuses to return to her family,
- H. whereas Mansour Al-Timani has been obliged to sign a gag order preventing him from talking to the media,
- I. whereas women in Saudi Arabia continue to suffer under many severe forms of discrimination in the fields of personal status, employment, participation in public life, the subordination of women to men and restrictions on their freedom of movement and their choice of partners; deploring the fact that domestic violence, notably against domestic workers, remains widespread,
- J. whereas child offenders continue to be condemned to death such as in the case of Rizana Nafeek, a Sri Lankan domestic worker who was sentenced to capital punishment for the death of an infant in her custody when she allegedly was 17 years old,
- K. whereas the criminalisation of any contact between unmarried individuals of the opposite sex in Saudi Arabia severely impedes the ability of rape victims to seek justice and whereas women victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation are considered and sentenced as prostitutes and not protected as victims,
- L. noting that state parties to international covenants on human rights (such as the C.E.D.A.W.) have the obligation to ensure the equal rights of men and women,
- M. noting that King Abdullah announced on 3 October 2007 a judicial reform and training for judges and lawyers,
1. Calls on the Government of Saudi Arabia to review the court cases of the Al-Taimani couple and the girl of Qatif as a matter of urgency and to free the complainants of all charges which constitute a grave violation of international human rights law and standards;
 2. Strongly condemns the continuing heavy discrimination and violence against women; calls on the Saudi Arabian Government to reform the laws and judiciary system of the country and to lift restrictions on women's rights including women's free movement, prohibition of driving, their employment opportunities, their legal personality and their representation in judicial processes;
 3. Calls for equal passive and active voting rights for men and women;
 4. Calls on the Government of Saudi Arabia to review all cases of child offenders who have been condemned to death, to suspend the death sentence for child offenders and to introduce a moratorium on capital punishment;

5. Calls on the Saudi Arabian Government to promote an awareness campaign on violence against women, specially domestic violence;
6. Urges the authorities to revise and enforce national labour laws in order to provide equal protection for domestic workers as exist for workers of other branches and to ensure prosecution of employers responsible for sexual or physical abuse and labour rights abuses that violate existing national laws;
7. Calls on the Council and the Commission to raise those issues during the next Joint Council and Ministerial meeting between the EU and the Gulf Cooperation Council;
8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the UN General Secretary, Crown Prince Abdullah Ibn Abdul Aziz, the Saudi Arabian Government and the Secretary General of the Centre for National Dialogue of Saudi Arabia.