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19.11.2013

B7-0500/2013

## 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 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on Bangladesh: human rights and forthcoming elections  
(2013/2951(RSP))

**Michael Gahler, Laima Liucija Andrikiienė, Cristian Dan Preda, Filip Kaczmarek, Gay Mitchell, Ivo Belet, Mariya Gabriel, Bernd Posselt, Tunne Kelam, Philippe Boulland, Jean Roatta, Eduard Kukan, Roberta Angelilli, Monica Luisa Macovei, Elena Băsescu, Petri Sarvamaa, Eija-Riitta Korhola, Giovanni La Via, Sari Essayah, Krzysztof Lisek**  
on behalf of the PPE Group

**European Parliament resolution on Bangladesh: human rights and forthcoming elections  
(2013/2951(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Bangladesh, in particular those of 14 March 2013, 10 July 2008 and of 6 September 2007,
  - having regard to the Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and the People's Republic of Bangladesh on Partnership and Development,
  - having regard to the statement of 12 August 2013 by the European Union Delegation on the detention of Mr Adilur Rahman Khan,
  - having regard to the statement of the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon of 31 October 2013 on the situation in Bangladesh,
  - having regard to the principles of the United Nations Charter, to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, to the 1993 Declaration of Vienna and the Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights, to the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and programme of action,
  - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Bangladesh is a party,
  - having regard to Rule 122 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the EU has good, long-standing relations with Bangladesh, including through the Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development;
- B. whereas Parliamentary elections are to be held in Bangladesh before 25 January 2014;
- C. whereas the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) called for a three-day shutdown, or “hartal”, beginning on Sunday 10 November 2013, aimed at pressuring the ruling Awami League (AL) to hold the forthcoming general election under a neutral caretaker government, which resulted in a bout of violence and at least one casualty and several injured;
- D. whereas this shutdown led to five senior opposition leaders being arrested by the government as well as the arrest of approximately 1,000 BNP followers and members arrested in rural areas since Friday 8 November;
- E. whereas already in the last year, Bangladesh has been hit by a wave of violent protests over war crimes convictions, when the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) set up in 2010 to investigate abuses that took place during the country's 1971 war of independence has handed down eight convictions so far and six defendants have been

sentenced to death;

F. whereas more than 100 people have been killed in political clashes this year;

G. whereas on 5 November 2013, 152 paramilitary soldiers were handed death sentences by the special court set up to prosecute the crimes committed during the 2009 mutiny; whereas UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay expressed alarm at these death sentences, following reports that the accused were tortured and that the mass trials fell short of human rights standards;

1. Is deeply concerned about the recent outbreaks of violence in Bangladesh and about the high number of casualties in these clashes; expresses its condolences to relatives and acquaintances of those killed and injured as a result of the violence;
2. Calls on the Government to instruct its security forces to strictly observe their obligation to use maximum restraint and avoid lethal force and to thoroughly investigate the deaths of all those killed;
3. Urges all political leaders in the country to de-escalate political tensions and to strictly call on their supporters not to participate in any acts of violence;
4. Calls on all political parties and actors concerned to enter into dialogue with each other and to respect the rule of law, including the provisions of the constitution with regard to deadlines to hold elections, exercise restraint and to express their views peacefully, in order to ensure an environment conducive to credible and peaceful elections;
5. Calls on all relevant stakeholders to respect the outcome of elections which have been held freely and fairly;
6. Welcomes the deployment of an EU Election Observation Mission to observe the Parliamentary elections in Bangladesh;
7. Is generally concerned about the human rights situation in Bangladesh and reminds the government to refrain from purely political motivated arrests; recalls the obligation of the Government of Bangladesh to respect its international commitments in the field of human rights;
8. Acknowledges the need for reconciliation, justice and accountability for the crimes committed during the 1971 war of independence but reiterates its strong opposition against the use of the death penalty in all cases and under any circumstances;
9. Calls on the Bangladesh judiciary to refrain from imposing death sentences and on the competent authorities to introduce an official moratorium on executions as a first step towards the abolition of capital punishment;
10. Calls on the European External Action Service to monitor closely the human rights and political situation in Bangladesh in the light of recent events;

11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission, the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Secretary General, the UN Human Rights Council and the Government and Parliament of Bangladesh.