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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

With request for inclusion in the debate on topical and urgent subjects of major importance to Rule 50 of the Rules of Procedure

by Jean Lambert, Marie Anne Isler Béguin, Nelly Maes
on behalf of the GREEN/EFA Group

On Bangladesh

The European Parliament,

A. whereas the government of Bangladesh deployed allegedly 40 000 members of the armed forces, and launched "Operation Clean Heart" on 17 October 2002,

B. whereas authorities claim that the operation has been launched in order to fight rising levels of crime in the country and the number of fire arms in private possession, whereas however the legal status of the army's involvement as well as the time frame are not clear

C. whereas the military immediately started house-to-house raids and searches; stopped, questioned and searched vehicles; picked up occupants for questioning, all without warrants,

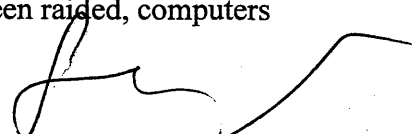
D. whereas thousands have so far been arrested, and detained incommunicado, many reportedly tortured during detention and interrogation, which has caused 25 deaths in the first 25 days of the said military operation, and almost all the killings while in military custody,

E. whereas excessive force has been used during such arrests and raids, and that many detainees, even while under arrest, and in some cases, after release, have been sent to hospital with severe injuries caused by beatings and tortures while in army custody,

F. whereas the government, while acknowledging deaths in custody, has claimed that all the deaths were the result of "heart attacks", while families of victims have insisted that the detainees died because of torture, and as they were taken to hospital, witnesses reported marks on the bodies consistent with infliction of torture,

G. whereas the military have arrested, without any judicial mandate, at least three members of the Bangladesh Parliament, all belonging to opposition political parties, and the detained MPs have claimed that they have been tortured in custody, and even one MP's photo appeared in newspapers, showing him shackled and blindfolded,

H. whereas other leading opposition political leaders, including the leader of the Opposition's Political Advisor and former minister Saber Hossain Chowdhury, have been detained without warrant; and the opposition's Centre for Research and Information has been raided, computers



damaged and documents taken by the military,

I. noting that a four-party coalition government including two Islamist parties, were voted into power in the parliamentary general election on 1 October 2001, and immediately thereafter Bangladesh witnessed an outburst of violence against the losing Awami League's (AL) voters, party workers and particularly against the Hindu community,

J. noting further that there seems to be no members of the Jamaat among those having been seized under "Operation Clean Heart" although this movement is renowned as being equipped with a considerable amount of arms

K. whereas the widespread and systematic attack on minority Hindus has continued unabated,

L. noting that the EU-Bangladesh Cooperation Agreement is based on respect for human rights and democratic principles, and that the violation of Article 1 is a breach that can lead to suspension of the Agreement,

M. whereas the Commission must ensure that the human rights situation in Bangladesh is monitored and that the European Parliament is kept informed of it,

N. noting that Bangladesh has obligations under international law as a State party to both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the United Nations Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment,

1. Expresses its serious concern on arbitrary and mass arrests, detention, torture, and killings in military custody, and the deteriorating human rights situation in Bangladesh following the military's "Operation Clean Heart", and concerned that the opposition MPs and leaders have been targeted by the military,

2. Expresses its concern that the situation of minorities, especially the Hindus, has not improved,

3. Expresses its concern that growing Islamic radicalization is undermining the secular tradition of Bangladesh,

4. Calls on the government of Bangladesh to stop arbitrary mass arrests, detentions, tortures, and killings in military custody, and other custodial deaths and to guarantee adequate reparation to all those who have been injured,

5. Calls on the government to immediately institute an independent body to conduct a prompt and fair investigation into the killings and tortures; to ensure that its findings be made public, and those responsible for deaths and ill-treatment be made accountable before courts of law,

6. Calls on the government to release opposition members of parliament, opposition political leaders, and cease attacks and harassment of opposition activists,

7. Strongly urges that a Bangladesh National Human Rights Commission be established without further delay, endowed with adequate powers and sufficient staff to perform effectively and properly, and that the military not be kept out of the Commission's purview,

8. Calls on the government not to offer any immunity to the military in any form whatsoever for this "Operation Clean Heart",

9. Encourages the government of Bangladesh to protect human rights and pursue democratic principles in all aspects, including dealing with rising crimes rates,

10. Calls on the Commission to engage with the government of Bangladesh under the EU-Bangladesh Cooperation Agreement to ensure violations stop, human rights are protected, and that the European Parliament is kept informed,

11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Parliament and Government of Bangladesh