

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

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*Session document*

24.4.2007

B6-0161/2007

## **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 Pasqualina Napoletano, Richard Howitt, Elena Valenciano Martínez-Orozco

on behalf of the PSE Group

on Alan Johnston, BBC Journalist kidnapped in Gaza

**European Parliament resolution on Alan Johnston, BBC Journalist kidnapped in Gaza**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
  - whereas BBC journalist Alan Johnston was abducted at gunpoint on 12 March 2007, whilst returning home in Gaza City, and his whereabouts have remained unknown since that date,
  - whereas Mr Johnston has remained in Gaza for the past three years, during a period of increased violence, specifically to report the suffering of the Gaza people to the outside world,
  - whereas this case has come to symbolise the crisis of violence and media intimidation and there has been wide international solidarity calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Mr Johnston, with daily protests being held in Europe, the Palestinian territories and across the Middle East and whereas the abduction has been condemned across the world by people of all faiths and none,
  - whereas the Palestinian media community, public and politicians from all sides have condemned the kidnapping and are calling for his immediate release and an end to all kidnapping, proving the extent to which his work is appreciated by the local populations,
  - whereas President Abbas has confirmed publicly that there is credible evidence that Mr Johnston is alive, that he is held in secure conditions and that there is information as to which group is holding him,
  - whereas the BBC retains a justified reputation as one of the world's leading broadcasters, upholding the values of impartiality, objectivity and fairness in its reporting,
  - whereas, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, Reporters Without Borders and the International Federation of Journalists, 15 foreign journalists have been kidnapped in the Gaza strip since August 2005 and thousands of journalists around the world face the threat of kidnapping, violence and intimidation on a daily basis,
1. Calls for Alan Johnston to be immediately and unconditionally released unharmed and returned to safety;
  2. Expresses its warm support for Mr Johnston's family in these difficult circumstances and for his BBC colleagues and management, who have been campaigning tirelessly

to build public and political support for his release;

- 3 Pays tribute to Mr Johnston's record as a journalist of the highest integrity with a record of sixteen years working for the BBC and in particular the past three years spent in Gaza, where he has been the only permanently-based foreign journalist from a major media organisation;
- 4 Expresses its solidarity with the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), and their member unions, including the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate, in their efforts to secure Mr Johnston's release and their campaign for a new global commitment to end threats to independent journalism; recalls in this regard the appeal delivered by the IFJ to the leaders of the Palestinian Authority on 19 April 2007, with the signatures of 197 Members of the European Parliament;
- 5 Calls on the Palestinian Authority to devote the necessary resources and redouble their efforts to secure Mr Johnston's speedy release, to ensure that journalists in Gaza are able to carry out their duties free from the threat of kidnap and harassment and to ensure that all attacks against journalists and other civilians are investigated thoroughly;
- 6 Calls on the European Commission Technical Assistance office to the West Bank and Gaza strip, diplomatic representatives of EU Member States and the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) to strengthen and coordinate their efforts to secure Mr Johnston's release;
- 7 Condemns this and all other acts of violence and intimidation against the free exercise of journalism and freedom of expression; stresses that the safety of journalists must be treated as a priority by all those attached to an open and democratic society and to progress toward peace everywhere in line with the unanimously agreed resolution of the United Nations Security Council adopted on 23 December 2006;
- 8 Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative for CFSP, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the President of the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian Legislative Council and the UN Secretary General