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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 Eva-Britt Svensson

on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

on human rights in Bangladesh

European Parliament resolution on human rights in Bangladesh

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Bangladesh,
 - 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 17 July 2007 by the UN Secretary-General on Bangladesh,
 - having regard to Rule 115(5) 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 the Bangladesh's present interim government, led by Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed, came to power in January 2007 and immediately suspended a wide range of civil and political rights previously enjoyed by Bangladesh's population;
- C. whereas these include - amongst other things - the suspension of the right to organise and to hold political meetings and the implementation of various measures aimed at controlling the freedom of speech and to legalize the censorship against the media,
- D. whereas the Bangladeshi Government has officially postponed the next parliamentary elections, which were to be held in January 2007, until the very end of 2008, under pressure from the military,
- E. whereas the recent, disturbing repression of the protests of students and teachers, which broke out at Dhaka university between 20 and 22 August 2007 and quickly spread to other educational institutions and universities,
- F. whereas it is reported that prominent teachers of Dhaka and Rajshahi university have been arrested and charged with 'anti-state activities', the arrested teachers have reportedly been tortured while in custody, thousands of students have been severely beaten and hunted by members of Bangladesh's joint forces, including students who had fled from the university to residential quarters and many have been physically tortured while in custody,
- G. whereas court cases against more than ten thousand people who participated in the anti-government activities are being instituted in Dhaka alone,
- H. whereas there are concerns about the state of health of Sigma Huda, the UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, who was sentenced in Dhaka on 27 August 2007

to three years' imprisonment and further concerns as to whether the standards of fair trial were upheld,

1. Calls on the Government of Bangladesh to secure the immediate release of all those have been arrested subsequent to the recent students' protests, including the General Secretary of the Dhaka University Shikkhok Samity and the biochemist Dr. Anwar Hossain, the dean of the Social Science Faculty of Dhaka university, Harun Ur Rashid; the former vice-chancellor of Rajshahi university, Saidur Rahman Khan and the Convenor of the Progressive Teachers' Society of Rajshahi university, professor Abdus Sobhan;
2. Calls upon the Bangladesh authorities to refrain from any retaliatory measures or punishments against teachers and students who have legitimately protested emergency rule, such as the use of physical and mental torture of detainees and the institution of court cases against protestors;
3. Recalls its demand for the lifting of the emergency rule imposed in Bangladesh on the population in January 2007, and the restoration of all civilian rights, as enshrined in the Bangladeshi Constitution;
4. Is extremely concerned by the recent arrest of Bangladesh's former Prime Minister, Mrs Sheikh Hasina; welcomes the Bangladeshi High Court's sentence of 28 August 2007 in favour of the release of Mrs Hasina and calls for her immediate release;
5. Calls for the immediate release of Mrs Sigma Huda, UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in person and calls on the Bangladeshi authorities to ensure that Mrs Huda receives all the medical cares she needs and all the requisite legal assistance; notes that Mrs Huda has been very active in the fight against corruption, atrocities against women and violation of their human rights;
6. Underlines the need to act quickly to organise free and fair general elections in Bangladesh; calls on the European Union to fully guarantee its technical support to the Bangladeshi authorities for the organisation of such elections;
7. Calls on the European Union, notably through its EC Delegation in Dhaka, to fully support the Bangladeshi democratic civil society's actions and projects in favour of democracy and human rights;
8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Bangladeshi Parliament and Government, the UN Secretary General.