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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 Women's Rights in Saudia Arabia

**European Parliament resolution on Women's Rights in Saudi 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 to 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 the overall situation in Saudi Arabia regarding the treatment of women is alarming and requires urgent action,
- B. whereas in November 2006 a victim of rape was sentenced to 90 lashes for a khilwa offence, being alone in the company of a member of the opposite sex who is not a close relative,
- C. deeply concerned by the fact that on 14 November 2007 the General Court of Qatif (Saudi Arabia) doubled 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 Abd al-Rahman al Lahim from the courtroom and from any future representation of his client,
- E. whereas M Al Lahim faces a disciplinary hearing at the Ministry of Justice where sanctions can include suspension for three years and disbarment,
- F. particularly concerned that 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,
- G. 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,

- H. noting that King Abdullah announced on 3 October 2007 a judicial reform promising new specialised courts and trainings for judges and lawyers,
1. Emphasizes that it is outrageous that women in Saudi Arabia continue to face 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 and domestic violence remained widespread;
  2. Condemns the Saudi authorities for the criminalisation of women victims of rape and trafficking for sexual exploitation and the disgraceful fact that they are considered, treated and sentenced as prostitutes and not protected as victims;
  3. Urges King Abdullah to cancel the ruling for the girl of Qatif and drop all charges against all victims of rape and trafficking for sexual exploitation;
  4. Urges the Saudi Arabian Government to reform the 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;
  5. Urges the Saudi Arabia Government and King Abdullah to take measures to eliminate all forms of discriminations against women in the political, public and private life;
  6. Requests that a campaign to promote awareness regarding violence against women in Saudi Arabia, especially domestic violence, is launched as soon as possible; takes the view that it is of the utmost importance that protection of women in Saudi Arabia is promoted to reach the internationally set standards as prescribed by the relevant international human rights instruments;
  7. Calls on the Council and on 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.