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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 Johan Van Hecke, Marios Matsakis, Renate Weber, Marielle De Sarnez,  
Mariela Velichkova Baeva, Frédérique Ries

on behalf of the ALDE Group

on Mass arrests in Bangladesh

**European Parliament resolution on Mass arrests in Bangladesh**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Bangladesh,
  - having regard to the state of emergency which was decreed by the Caretaker Government of Bangladesh on 11 January 2007,
  - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- 
- A. whereas the parliamentary elections are now scheduled to take place in December 2008 and the government has undertaken reforms that include registration of political parties,
  - B. whereas the state of emergency was declared on 11 January 2007 - after an interim government took power, general elections having been cancelled after political instability and violence in January 2007,
  - C. whereas in pursuing its efforts to minimise corruption the Bangladeshi Government has introduced sweeping repressive measures,
  - D. whereas increased incidences of torture and extra judicial killings have been recorded,
  - E. whereas the army is playing an increasingly significant role in the nationwide crackdown on corruption,
  - F. whereas using the emergency rules put in place in 2007, the Bangladeshi Government has arrested almost 25 000 citizens since 28 May 2008,
  - G. whereas the recent arrests follow the breakdown of prospects for negotiations between the government and the two main political parties, the Awami League and the Bangladesh National Party, over planned national elections in December,
  - H. whereas police say the operation is expected to last one month and is aimed at improving security ahead of the country's scheduled return to democracy with elections due by the end of the year,
  - I. whereas there are fears that the ongoing wave of mass arrests may result in a total breakdown of the prison system,
  - K. whereas on 11 June 2008 Bangladesh's new counterterrorism ordinance was adopted without public input,

1. Calls on the government to immediately end the recent waves of mass arrests under the Emergency Power Rules; the thousands detained should be either charged on the basis of credible evidence of criminal activities and guaranteeing their rights in a fair trial or immediately released;
2. Urges the Bangladeshi Government and the political parties to create a healthy political environment in which elections can be held; stresses that there must be a guarantee that the elections are genuine and free and that reform will be sustainable;
3. Stresses that the state of emergency must be lifted fully and immediately so that the elections of local councils can take place in August and the national elections in December 2008;
4. Expresses concern about the health and safety of the detainees, given massive prison overcrowding and well-documented patterns of torture and mistreatment of detainees;
5. Stresses that the government's determination to pursue party members stands in stark contrast to its unwillingness to prosecute soldiers and police for torture and killings;
6. Regrets that the Bangladeshi Government, while making progress on tackling corruption, has been far less assertive on political reform and calls for a return to democracy;
7. Demands that an end be put to the militarisation of the country;
8. Stresses that the army movement must be restricted during the elections schedule in order to make sure that elections proceed fairly and any pressure or interference be avoided;
9. Urges full EU support for Bangladesh once the democratisation process and the elections procedure have been put on the right track and opened to international monitoring and fundamental rights enshrined in the constitution be restored;
10. Urges the Commission to re-deploy the suspended EU-Election Observation Team as soon as the conditions allow it;
11. Considers that Bangladesh's new counterterrorism ordinance adopted on 11 June 2008 violates fundamental freedoms and basic fair trial rights and should be amended to meet international standards;
12. Urges the international community not to push Bangladesh into adopting laws related to counterterrorism that violate basic rights or to adopt them without adequate public consultation;
13. Calls on the Council and the Commission to monitor carefully the human rights and political situation in Bangladesh in the light of recent events;
14. Calls on the Commission to use its good offices with other donors and with the Bangladeshi Government to promote the adoption of effective measures in line with the provisions of this resolution;

15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Caretaker Government of Bangladesh and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.