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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 Roberto Musacchio

on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

on Bangladesh

European Parliament resolution on Bangladesh

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Bangladesh, in particular those of 16 November 2006 and 6 September 2007,
- having regard to Rule 115 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. Whereas Bangladesh has been under a state emergency since 11 January 2007, when Fakhruddin Ahmed took over as head of the country's military-backed 'caretaker' government, issued an Emergency Power Ordinance, and shortly afterwards proclaimed stringent Emergency Power Rules;

B. Whereas the imposition of emergency rule was accompanied by suspension of a whole series of civil rights which the Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees to its citizens; moreover, some of the suspensions, and alleged violations, of constitutional rights by the caretaker government have meanwhile been supplemented by amendments to the Emergency Power Rules adopted earlier this year;

C. Whereas the severity of the emergency regulations is underlined by the extension of the application of the death penalty - including for public protests, by provisions such as barring any person accused in any case under the emergency rules from seeking bail during the inquiry, investigation and trial of a case and by the blanket impunity that has been granted to all members of the country's 'law and order' forces;

D. Whereas international human rights organizations estimate the number of people who have been arbitrarily arrested since the imposition of emergency rule at least three hundred thousand; whereas the level of human rights violations has further dramatically deteriorated since the beginning of 2007 with large numbers of people reportedly being severely tortured, including journalists;

E. Whereas the caretaker government has so far ignored appeals by political parties, civil society organizations, and even by the Election Commission, to pave the way for the speedy holding of national elections and sticks to the absolute deadline which has been set at December 2008;

F. Whereas the hardship faced by Bangladesh's general population has been compounded by the fact that prices of basic food items such as rice have increased by a third or more in recent months and considering that for a large part of the population food expenses have already accounted for over 60% of their budget before the price explosion;

G. Whereas estimates by UNDP for coastal and island regions of the world's South indicate that, unless emissions of greenhouse gases are speedily and radically brought down, as much as a quarter of Bangladesh's territory threatens to be permanently submerged by rising levels of sea water in the Bay of Bengal; Whereas climate scientists warn that Bangladesh may have

20 to 25 million climate refugees by 2050 and that moreover, the frequency and intensity of cyclones, which are traditionally of great threat to the country, is likely to increase, and could affect inland areas which so far have been exempted from the effects of cyclones;

1. Calls on the government of Bangladesh to immediately and completely lift the state of emergency, as the most important step required in order to prepare the holding of the country's next parliamentary elections;
2. Calls on the government to speedily withdraw its new Anti-Terrorism Ordinance, and cancel any legal provisions for imposition of the death penalty against members of the public who try to defend the civil rights of the people of Bangladesh;
3. Calls on the caretaker government to ensure that, in preparing for parliamentary elections, it specifically makes sure that members of Bangladesh's ethnic and religious minorities be in a position to freely cast their votes;
4. Calls on the Bangladesh government to release all those who have been arbitrarily arrested under the state of emergency, and ensure that due processes of law, and adherence to constitutional provisions, be maintained whenever trials are held against politicians charged with corruption;
5. Insists that the G8 Summit next week has an enormous responsibility to avert further acceleration of the climate change and catastrophes that threaten the lives of millions in Bangladesh and elsewhere by adopting effective and far-reaching measures to curve CO2 emissions.
6. Ask its President to forward this resolution to Council, the Commission, the SAARC Member states and the Bangladeshi Government.