



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Plenary sitting

15.1.2013

B7-0039/2013

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 122 of the Rules of Procedure

on human rights situation in Bahrain
(2013/2513(RSP))

José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Elmar Brok, Laima Liucija Andrikienė, Cristian Dan Preda, Bernd Posselt, Roberta Angelilli, Mario Mauro, Eija-Riitta Korhola, Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris, Zuzana Roithová, Monica Luisa Macovei, Sari Essayah, Giovanni La Via, Philippe Boulland, Jean Roatta, Tunne Kelam, Elena Băsescu, Joanna Katarzyna Skrzydlewska, Mariya Gabriel, Tadeusz Zwiefka, Petri Sarvamaa
on behalf of the PPE Group

**European Parliament resolution on human rights situation in Bahrain
(2013/2513(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions of 27 October 2011 on Bahrain, and of 15 March 2012 on human rights violations in Bahrain,
 - having regard to the Hearing on Bahrain in the European Parliament Human Rights Subcommittee on 3 October 2011,
 - having regard to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative (VP/HR) on Bahrain in particular of 24 November 2011 on the publication of the report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), and of 23 November 2012 on the first anniversary of the publication of the report of the BICI, and the statements by the Spokesperson of the VP/HR on the anniversary of the unrest in Bahrain on 13 February 2012, on the situation of Mr. Abdulhadi al-Khawaja in Bahrain on 10 April 2012, on the recent violence in Bahrain on 24 October 2012 and on 7 November 2012, and the statement by the HR/VP on the situation in Egypt, Syria, Yemen and Bahrain at the European Parliament on 12 October 2011,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on Bahrain of 23 May, 12 April, 21 March 2011,
 - having regard to the statement of 23 June and 30 September 2011 by the UN Secretary-General on the sentences imposed on 21 Bahraini political activists, human rights defenders and opposition leaders, and the statement by the Spokesperson for the secretary-General on Bahrain on 1 November 2012 and on 8 January 2013,
 - having regard to the Report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), released in November 2011 and the Follow-Up Report on 21 November 2012,
 - having regard to Articles 61, 84, 87, 134, 135 and 146 of Bahrain's Law of Criminal Procedure,
 - having regard to the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders of 2004, as updated in 2008,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the Arab Charter on Human Rights to all of which Bahrain is a party,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
 - having regard to Rule 122 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the human rights situation in Bahrain remains critical in the wake of

crackdown on pro- democracy protester in 2011; whereas many actions of the Bahraini government continue to seriously violate and restrict the rights and freedom of part of the Bahraini people;

- B. whereas security and police forces continue to use disproportionate violence, leading to injuries and death; whereas violations by the Bahraini authorities are increasingly reported including people killed, injured, harassed, intimidated, beaten, arrested or gone missing;
- C. whereas the Bahrain Center for Human rights is gravely concerned about the continuous violations against children's rights in Bahrain; whereas the arrests, detention and ill treatment of children is on-going, with children as young as 13 getting arrested and while the actions of the Bahraini authorities are a clear violation of the Convention on the Right of the Child, Bahrain was awarded a seat in the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child;
- D. whereas on 7 November 2012, the Interior Ministry issued a statement revoking the citizenship of the 31 people; whereas revoking citizenship without due process violates the rights of Bahraini nationals under international law;
- E. whereas on October 2012, the interior minister , Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah al Khalifa, ordered a ban on all public rallies and demonstrations saying that authorities would no longer tolerate protesters against the government;
- F. whereas Security forces arrested, during the last three months, several human rights defenders, as Sayed Ysuf al-Muhafadha, acting vice president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR), who has campaigned tirelessly for the release of many activists in particular of Mr Nabeel Rajab, President of the BCHR, who has been detained and charged with using the social media to disseminate false news;
- G. whereas on October 16, authorities arrested Mohammad al-Maskati, president of the Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights, on charges of participating in an "illegal gathering" in Manama a week earlier; whereas he was released on bail the next day, and no court date has been set;
- H. whereas on 5 November 2012 several homemade bombs detonated in the capital, Manama, which killed two workers and injured a third one;
- I. whereas Bahrain's Court of Cassation ruling on January 7, 2013, upholding lengthy prison terms of 13 prominent dissidents appears to confirm the inability of Bahrain's judicial system to protect basic rights; whereas a military court had convicted the dissidents solely for exercising their rights to free expression and peaceful assembly;
- J. whereas on 18 October 2012, four men were detained on the basis of defaming the Bahraini King on a social network and during their arrest, security forces confiscated their computers and other electronic equipment; whereas all detainees denied any wrongdoing;
- K. whereas despite promises to implement the Bahrain Independent Commission of

Inquiry (BICI) recommendations and to respect basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, it's becoming clear that the authorities have no intention of listening seriously to the protesters;

- L. whereas on 7 December 2012 Bahraini Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Issa al-Khalifah called for dialogue with the country's opposition to break a deadlock in the restive Gulf Arab state; whereas a consensual dialogue between all forces is the only way forward to reach a comprehensive solution;
1. Expresses its grave concern over the escalated use of excessive force by the authorities in Bahrain against peaceful protesters and on the violations of Human Rights in Bahrain continue unabated by arresting activists despite the very welcome establishment of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) by King Hamad bin Isla Al Khalifa, which raised great hopes when it delivered its 26 reform recommendations;
 2. Regrets that the Government of Bahrain's intention to honour BICI's findings at Universal Periodic Review (UPR) sessions in May and September, ahead of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, appears to be a shallow promise taking into consideration that little of substance has been achieved since on either human rights or democracy in Bahrain;
 3. Considers that accountability for past violations is a key element on the path towards justice and genuine reconciliation, which are necessary elements for social stability; strongly supports, therefore, the recommendations of the Bahraini Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), endorsed by King Hamad and his Government; and call for a timeframe to be set to ensure their full implementation;
 4. Reiterates its demand on Bahraini authorities to restore and respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, both online and offline, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, women's rights and gender equality, fight against discrimination, and to immediately end all restrictions on access to information and communication technologies; calls on the Bahraini authorities to lift all entry restrictions for foreign journalists and international human rights organizations and to allow for monitoring of the announced independent investigations into human rights violations and the implementation of the announced reforms;
 5. Calls on the government of Bahrain to conduct a prompt and independent investigation in all cases of violations against children including but not limited to: arrest, detention and torture and to ensure that children be held in detention separate from adults, and treated according to the juvenile judicial system;
 6. Expresses its concern on the latest sentences against opposition activists and medics and calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all Bahraini political prisoners detained for participating in peaceful pro-democracy protests, and condemns strongly the continuous crackdown on civilians, who choose to exercise their rights of freedom of expression and peaceful assembly;

7. Calls on the government of Bahrain to ensure that the process leading to criminal prosecution of those arrested and detained on criminal charges meet the international standards of transparency of investigation, fairness of procedures in prosecution and fundamental standards of fair trial;
8. Calls on the government of Bahrain to take all necessary steps to guarantee the competence, independence and impartiality of the judiciary in Bahrain and ensure that the Bahraini judiciary acts with full conformity to international human rights standards, in particular ensure that the courts may not be used for political reasons and to sanction the legitimate exercise of rights and freedoms universally guaranteed; calls on the Bahraini government to strengthen the rights of defendants including by ensuring that they enjoy fair trial guarantees, including by allowing them to effectively challenge the evidence against them and to provide for independent judicial oversight over the grounds for detention and ensure the protection of detainees from abusive treatment during criminal investigations;
9. Welcomes the adoption of the new EU human rights package and calls on the HR/VP and all European institutions to place human rights at the centre of its relations with all third countries taking concrete actions, jointly with the 27 EU Member States, to ensure a clear and principled EU policy vis-à-vis Bahrain that addresses the ongoing serious human rights violations, including through demarches, public statements, initiatives at the Human Rights Council and conditionality in existing and future trade relations;
10. Endorses the recommendations of the United Nations Universal Periodic Review and calls on the Government to give political priority and allocate necessary resources to ensure an adequate and timely follow-up; calls on the Bahraini Government to improve human rights protection and ratify international human rights conventions, such as the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Optional Protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances;
11. Supports and encourages the co-operation between the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) of Bahrain, and recommends further strengthening of the NHRI on the basis of the Paris Principles of pluralism and independence; strongly supports the NHRI in its function to monitor and protect the human rights of all Bahraini's, but remains convinced of the necessity of ensuring operational freedom of human rights defenders and organisations in order to achieve this;
12. Welcomes the progressive stance taken by the Bahraini Government regarding many aspects of the position of women in Bahraini society;
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of the Kingdom of Bahrain;