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Plenary sitting

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B7-0040/2013

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))

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on behalf of the ALDE Group

B7-0040/2013

**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 violation in Bahrain,
- having regard to the visit of the European Parliament delegation to Bahrain of 19 December 2012,
- 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), on the decision of the Bahraini Court of Appeal on the cases of Mr. Abdulah al-Khawaja and nineteen other individuals on 5 September 2012, and of 23 November 2012 on the first anniversary of the publication of the report of the BICI; the Statements by its spokesperson 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 sentencing of Mr. Nabeel Rajab in Bahrain on 16 August 2012, on the recent violence in Bahrain on 24 October 2012 and on 7 November 2012; and the statements 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 24 May, 12 April, 21 March and 21 February 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 Statements by the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General on the bomb attack in Bahrain on 12 April 2012 and on Bahrain on 30 September 2011, 15 February, 24 April, 05 September, and 01 November 2012, and 08 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 the GCC Ministerial Council statement on the terrorist bombings in Manama on 5 November 2012,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, 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 of 1948,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines on human Rights Defenders of 2004, as updated in 2008,

- having regard to the 1949 Geneva Convention,

- having regard to Rule 122 of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. whereas many recent actions of the Bahraini government continue to seriously violate and restrict the rights and freedoms of parts of the Bahraini people, particularly the right of individuals to peaceful protest, free speech and digital freedoms;
- 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 extrajudicial arrests, extrajudicial raids of houses, unfair trials, media attacks, intimidation and humiliation of citizens at check points and massive discrimination at work and university;
- C. 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;
- D. whereas on 30 October 2012 Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, the interior minister, announced a ban on all protest gatherings and threatened to take legal action against organised anti-government demonstrations that included opposition political activists, lawyers and human rights activists;
- E. whereas on 05 November 2012, several homemade bombs detonated in the capital, Manama, killed two workers and injured a third one;
- F. whereas on 07 November 2012 the government has revoked the nationality of 31 activists who participated in peaceful protests without due process violating the rights of Bahraini nationals under international laws;
- G. whereas on 18 December 2012 Sayed Yousif al-Muhafdha, vice president of the Bahraini Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) who has called for the release of many activists, in particular of Mr. Nabeel Rajab, President of the BCHR, has been detained and charged with using social media to disseminate false news; whereas his case has been adjourned until 17 January 2013 and he remains in custody, and if convicted faces up to two years in prison; whereas Mr al-Muhafdha has been detained on several occasions by the Bahraini authorities;
- H. whereas on 07 January 2013 Bahrain's Court of Cassation upheld prison terms for 13 prominent activists on charges of plotting to overthrow the monarchy; whereas 8 of them including Mr. Abdelhadi al-Khawaja were condemned to life sentence; whereas this verdict is final and the only avenue left for the defended is a royal pardon;
- I. whereas despite promises to implement the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) recommendations and to respect basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, the Bahraini authorities have failed to investigate the violence and to hold the perpetrators to account; whereas Bahraini authorities continue their crackdown on peaceful political dissent;

- J. 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 necessary for reaching a comprehensive solution;
1. Condemns the ongoing human rights violation by the Bahraini authorities and security forces, particularly the use of violence, the excessive use of tear gas, the arrest and detainment of peaceful protestors and a ban on all forms of protest, despite the concrete set of recommendations by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) and the expressed commitment by the Bahraini authorities to implement the BICI reforms;
 2. Regrets that the BICI Report Follow Up issued on 21 November 2012 also has not lead to any meaningful change in the policies of the Bahraini authorities, particularly the lack of progress in finding a political solution and promised democratization of the country, urges the Bahraini authorities to ensure the swift implementation of the recommendations and to immediately respect basic human rights an fundamental freedoms;
 3. Reiterates its demand to the Bahraini security forces and authorities to stop the use of violence against peaceful protestors, to end the ongoing repression of political dissent, their prosecution, detention and torture; urges the authorities to fully respect fundamental freedoms, particularly freedom of assembly and expression, both online and offline, and calls on the Bahraini authorities to implement the necessary democratic reforms, and encourage an inclusive and constructive national dialogue to enable reconciliation and restore collective social consensus in the country;
 4. Condemns the latest sentences against opposition activists and medics and calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all Bahraini political prisoners, including doctors and medical staff, detained and charged with alleged violations related to the rights of expression, peaceful assembly and association, in particular Sayed Yousif al-Muhafadha, Nabeel Rajab and Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, and to reinstate the revoked nationalities of Bahraini citizens;
 5. Urges the Bahraini authorities to immediately lift the ban on all demonstrations which is irreconcilable with the authorities' professed commitment to reform and will not help advance national reconciliation nor build trust among all parties;
 6. Calls on the Bahraini authorities to lift all entry restrictions for foreign journalists and international human rights organisations and to allow an independent monitoring mechanism of the evolution of the situation on the ground by the office of the UN Human Rights High commissioner and the implementation of the announced BICI reforms and of the UN Universal Periodic Review of Bahrain, including those related to human rights defenders; calls on the Bahraini authorities to adopt measures to deter future human rights violations;
 7. Stresses its strong disapproval of the lack of an EU response to the ongoing situation in Bahrain, calls on the HR/VP to condemn the ongoing violations of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms and to impose targeted restrictive measures (visa bans and asset freezes) against those individuals responsible and involved in the human rights abuses

(and as documented by the BICI report) and to reconsider the current EU's trade and diplomatic relations with Bahrain;

8. Calls for the suspension and ban exports of tear gas and crowd control material to Bahrain until investigations have been made as regards to their improper utilisation and until the perpetrators of such improper utilisation are held accountable;
9. Calls for EU export restrictions on technologies used for tracking, tracing, censoring and surveillance of information and communication flows resulting in human rights violations
10. Call for a suspension of all technical cooperation programmes to the Prosecutor's Office and to the Ministry of Justice, until sentences and trials that are contrary to international human rights standards have been reviewed and human rights defenders have been released;
11. Call for increased support to independent human rights NGOs operating in Bahrain;
12. Calls on the EU High Representative, together with the EU Member States, to now work together and develop a clear strategy on how the EU will both publically and privately actively push for the release of the imprisoned activists prior to the EU-GCC Ministerial Meetings due to take place in Bahrain mid 2013; and in this respect calls on the High Representative to work with EU Member States, and ensure the adoption of EU Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions on the human rights situation in Bahrain which should a specific call for the immediate and unconditional release of the imprisoned activists.
13. Instructs its president to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the government and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of the Kingdom of Bahrain.