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Plenary sitting

10.9.2013

B7-0422/2013

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
(2013/2830(RSP))

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on behalf of the ALDE Group

B7-0422/2013

**European Parliament resolution on Human rights situation in Bahrain
(2013/2830(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on 27 October 2011, on 15 March 2012 and on 17 January 2013,
- having regard to its resolution of 24 March 2011 on European Union relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council ,
- having regard to the statements by its President and in particular of 11 April 2012, and on 11 May 2012,
- having regard to the visit of a delegation of its Subcommittee on Human Rights to Bahrain on 19 and 20 December 2012 and to the press statement issued by that delegation, and the Arab Peninsula delegation visit from 27 to 30 April 2013 and its press statement,
- having regard to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) on Bahrain, in particular her statements of 7 January, of 11 February and of 1 July 2013
- having regard to the statements by the UN Secretary-General in particular the one of 8 January 2013 and to the statement of the spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on 6 August 2013,
- having regard to the EU-GCC Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting in Manama, Bahrain on 30 June 2013,
- having regard to the extraordinary meeting of Bahrain's National Assembly held on 28 July 2013 resulting to the emergency decrees issued by the King of Bahrain Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah
- having regard to the 2006 Bahraini "Protecting Society from Terrorist Acts" legislation,
- having regard to the Arab League's Ministerial Council's decision on 1 September 2013 in Cairo of setting up a pan-Arab court of human rights in Bahrain's Manama,
- having regard to the report released by the BICI in November 2011 and to its follow-up report of 21 November 2012,
- having regard to the 1966 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 of 1948,
- having regard to Rules 122 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the human rights situation in Bahrain remains critical in the wake of the crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in 2011; whereas many recent actions of the Bahraini Government continue to seriously violate and restrict the rights and freedoms of segments of the Bahraini people, particularly the right of individuals to peaceful protest, freedom of expression and digital freedom; whereas the Bahraini authorities are continuing their crackdown on peaceful political protesters;

B. whereas security and police forces continue to use disproportionate violence, leading to injuries and death; whereas there are increasing reports of violations by the Bahraini authorities, including extrajudicial arrests, extrajudicial raids on houses, unfair trials, torture, media attacks, intimidation and humiliation of citizens at checkpoints and massive discrimination at work and university; whereas human rights activists are facing ongoing systematic targeting, harassment and detention in Bahrain being some of them condemned to life imprisonment; whereas these sentences confirm the inability of Bahrain's judicial system to protect basic rights;

C. whereas several reports have linked EU made technologies to the harsh crackdown on opposition figures and on the free internet in Bahrain;

D. Whereas on 28 July 2013 the Bahraini National Assembly has held an extraordinary meeting to agree on 22 recommendations imposing a series of emergency measures that will severely restrict basic rights;

E. whereas these recommendations included amendments and revisions to the 2006 Law on the Protection of Society from Acts of Terrorism, supported by a royal decree on 31 July, which include recommendations to increase the detention period or revoke citizenship of anyone found guilty of committing or inciting an act of terrorism; whereas revoking citizenship on the basis of unfair trial convictions would violate the rights of Bahraini nationals under international law; whereas art 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, states that "everyone has the right to a nationality" and "no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality"

F. Whereas, on 6 August 2013 King Hamad issued a royal decree based on "Recommendation 6" that amends the 1973 Law on public gathering and demonstrations indefinitely suspending the right to free assembly in the capital Manama;

G. Whereas the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has stated that although it welcomes the National Assembly's recommendation that "basic liberties, particularly freedom of opinion, should not be affected to maintain a balance between law enforcement and human rights protection," it reiterates its concern about the restrictions on public demonstrations and other public gatherings.

H. Whereas the Bahraini authorities appear to be trying to avoid a repeat of the 2011 anti-government protests, which, according to the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, were violently suppressed and left 35 dead; whereas, on 12 August 2013 Bahrain's Prime Minister said that the authorities would "forcefully confront the suspicious calls to violate law and order" and "punish those who stand behind them."

I. Whereas Bahraini authorities instructed British Airways to deny Bahraini human rights activist Maryam al-Khawaja access to a London-bound flight on her way to Manama to observe the protests scheduled for 14 August 2013.

J. Whereas, following the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) report the Bahraini authorities committed themselves to undergone reforms; whereas government claims to have overhauled

the legal and law enforcement systems, reinstating employees who were unfairly dismissed, and setting up a special prosecution unit to investigate abuse claims as well as reforms in the police; whereas, these reforms have been cosmetic in nature, as since the BICI report was released, little has changed with political prisoners still imprisoned, ongoing arrests, extra-judicial beatings of young protesters, and the heavy use of tear gas.

K. Whereas an official delegation led by Minister of Human Rights Affairs, Dr. Salah bin Ali Abdulrahman, will attend from 7 to 27 September 2013, the 24th session of the UN Human Rights Council and review, during its meetings, the implementation of the recommendations of the Human Rights Council and the recommendations of Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry as well as the recommendation of the National Assembly that the government of Bahrain has pledged to implement according to a timetable and program of action.

L. Whereas the UN special rapporteur on torture, Juan Mendez, has expressed his "deep disappointment" over Bahrain's decision to indefinitely postpone his visit to the county.

1. Reiterates its support to peaceful calls for freedom, respect for human rights and democracy in Bahrain and calls on the Government of Bahrain to fully comply with its international human rights commitments, including respect for freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, and association, and urge all **citizens** to exercise these rights in a peaceful manner;
2. Regrets the new restrictive measures taken by the King of Bahrain and urges the King Hamad to revoke those royal decrees; Urges the Bahraini authorities to lift immediately the restrictions on all demonstrations and on assembly, which are irreconcilable with their professed commitment to launch reforms and will not help to advance in the national reconciliation or build trust among all parties
3. Regrets the government's attempts to prevent Bahrainis from exercising their rights to free assembly and expression, the restriction of freedoms online and the sentencing of peaceful activists for exercising their right to free expression; Condemns the attitude of the Bahraini authorities preventing Bahraini human rights activist Maryam al-Khawaja access to a London-bound flight on her way to Manama to observe the protests scheduled for 14 August 2013.
4. Calls on the Bahraini authorities to put an immediate end to acts of repression including judicial harassment against human rights defenders, to release them immediately and unconditionally, since their detention is arbitrary and to implement without any further delay the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) report and of the Universal Periodic Review that include the release of all prisoners of conscience arbitrarily detained, end of torture and other ill-treatments and to make accountable those responsible of such grave human rights violations.
5. Considers that accountability for past violations is a key element on the path towards justice and genuine reconciliation, which are necessary for social stability;
6. Believes that arbitrary deprivation of nationality could lead to statelessness with serious consequences for the protection of the human rights of the individuals concerned; Notes that the revocation of the nationality of political opponents by the Bahraini authorities is contrary to international law
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 on the EU and its Member States to ban the export of teargas, and other tools that can be used for repression, including technologies;

9. Calls on Saudi Arabia, Iran and other countries to refrain from interfering in Bahrain's domestic affairs;

10. Expresses grave concern or the unrest in Bahrain to lead to regional spill over;

11. Calls for the Bahraini authorities to release all political prisoners, especially those with EU citizenship;

12. Calls on the VP/HR and the Member States to work together to develop a clear strategy for how the EU will, both publicly and privately, actively push for the release of the imprisoned activists, and calls on the VP/HR to work with the Member States to ensure the adoption of Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on the human rights situation in Bahrain, which should include a specific call for the immediate and unconditional release of the imprisoned activists

13. Calls on the Bahrain authorities to allow the UN special rapporteur on torture to visit Bahrain

14. 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.