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B7-0037/2014

## 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 recent elections in Bangladesh  
(2014/2516(RSP))

**Véronique De Keyser, Ana Gomes, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Joanna Senyszyn,  
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on behalf of the S&D Group

**B7-0037/2014**

**European Parliament resolution on recent elections in Bangladesh  
(2014/2516(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Bangladesh, in particular those of 19 November 2013, 23 May 2013 and 3 March 2013

- having regard to the declaration of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton of 9 January 2014 on the outcome of the legislative elections in Bangladesh and to the statement of her spokesperson of 20 December 2013 on a EU election observation mission in Bangladesh

- having regard to the statement of UN High Commissioner for Human rights Navi Pillay of 1 December 2013

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

A. whereas the EU has a good, long-standing relationship with Bangladesh, including through the Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development;

B. whereas Bangladesh held parliamentary elections on 5 January 2014 following five years of rule by an elected, civilian government;

C. whereas these elections were overshadowed by violence in which on election day at least 20 people died; whereas in the run up to election day hundreds lost their lives; whereas these elections were one of the most violent in the history of the country;

D. whereas the main opposition party Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) led by Khaleda Zia boycotted the elections after the ruling Awami League under Sheikh Hasina Wajed refused to install a neutral caretaker government administration to oversee the polls;

E. whereas the European Union, the United States and others refused to send observers to the polls

F. whereas the election boycott of the BNP allowed the Awami League to win 232 of the 300 elected seats thus reaching a three-quarters majority;

G. whereas Bangladesh's authorities continued with arbitrary arrests of opposition party members and attacks on minorities even after the Awami League won the elections;

H. whereas the international community, among them EU High Representative Catherine Ashton, strongly condemned the acts of violence which occurred in the run-up and during the elections; whereas US State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf declared after the elections that the results "do not appear to credibly express the will of the Bangladeshi people";

I. whereas Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed rejected all charges that the opposition

boycott undermined the legitimacy of her party's victory; whereas one day after the election the Prime Minister hinted that new polls could be called if the opposition ends its violent protests;

1. Reminds the Bangladeshi government that the European Union has consistently engaged with Bangladesh to support the consolidation of democracy and, in this context, has repeatedly called on all parties to create favourable conditions for transparent, inclusive and credible elections,

2. Regrets the fact that such conditions did not materialise and that the electorate was not given the choice to fully express their democratic choice, deplores that Bangladesh's political leaders failed to find a political solution to conduct these elections in a peaceful, inclusive, transparent and credible way despite many efforts, including most recently under UN auspices,

3. Regrets the fact that these conditions did not allow for the sending of an EU Election Observer Mission,

4. Strongly condemns the acts of violence and the loss of lives which occurred on both sides in the run-up to the elections as well as on election day and extends its condolences to the families of the victims, strongly urges all parties to call upon their supporters to cease violent activities forthwith,

5. Calls on the ruling Awami League to refrain from using repressive methods against opposition party members and to engage into a dialogue with the other main political force BNP in order to find a political agreement to end the on-going political crisis, strongly urges the Awami League to control and restrain all personal pertaining to public order institutions and other non-formal organisations from the use of violence,

6. Urges the Bangladeshi authorities to stop the post-election arrests of opposition party members and the attacks on minorities; calls on the government to release all political prisoners, to protect human rights defenders and to respect freedom of expression;

7. Welcomes the readiness of BNP leader Khaleda Zia to engage into discussions with the Awami League if the government releases BNP party members, reopens BNP party offices and withdraws false charges against its supporters,

8. Welcomes the declaration of Bangladesh's Prime Minister to look into the possibility of holding fresh elections if the opposition ends its violent protests, supports other Western countries in their readiness to broker a compromise that would see the Prime Minister agree to a credible election long before the expiry of her new, five-year term of office,

9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the European External Action Service, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Secretary General, the UN Human Rights Council and the Government and Parliament of Bangladesh.