



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Plenary sitting

14.1.2014

B7-0041/2014

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))

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on behalf of the PPE Group

**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 21 November 2013, 14 March 2013, and of 10 July 2008
- having regard to the Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and the People's Republic of Bangladesh on Partnership and Development,
- having regard to the declaration of 9 January 2014 by the High Representative Catherine Ashton on the Legislative Elections in Bangladesh, the Statement by her spokesperson of 20 December 2013 on the EU Election Observation Mission in Bangladesh and the Statement of the EU High Representative on the preparation for general elections in Bangladesh of 30 November 2013
- having regard to the principles of the United Nations Charter, to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, to the 1993 Declaration of Vienna and the Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights, to the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and programme of action,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Bangladesh is a party,
- having regard to Rule 122 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - A. whereas the EU has good, long-standing relations with Bangladesh, including through the Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development;
 - B. whereas the 10th Parliamentary elections were held in Bangladesh on 5 January 2014, which were marked by a very low voter turnout;
 - C. whereas the elections were boycotted by the largest opposition party, BNP, and its allies, amongst them Jamaat-e-Islami, the latter earlier having been banned from the polls by a court order;
 - D. whereas according to the Election Commission, elections were held in only 147 districts as the candidates from 153 other districts were elected unopposed, as there were no opponents because of the boycott;
 - E. whereas the EU as well as other international parties have not sent election observation missions as the main political forces in Bangladesh were not able to create the necessary conditions for transparent, inclusive and credible elections;
 - F. whereas according to reports at least 18 people were killed only over the election weekend during clashes of opposition activists with police, more than 150 voting

centres were burned, and during the lead up and the aftermath of the elections, more than 150 people in total lost their lives;

G. whereas the country's fragile economy has regularly been hit in the last months by general strikes - the so-called "hartals" - called for by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its allies, which resulted in bouts of violence, arrests and many casualties;

H. whereas in the months leading up to the elections, key opposition leaders have been arrested and put in detention by the law enforcement agencies;

I. whereas in the last years Bangladesh has suffered multiple waves of mainly politically motivated violent protests which took a huge toll on the country's vulnerable population;

J. whereas the non-conciliatory behaviour and missing restraint of the country's political parties led to an aggravation of the situation;

1. Notes with concern the preliminary results and low turnout for the elections held on 5 January;
2. Strongly condemns the acts of violence which occurred in the run-up and during the elections and particularly attacks against the most vulnerable populations, including women and children as well as religious and ethnic minorities;
3. Is deeply concerned about the high number of casualties in these clashes; expresses its condolences to the families of the victims;
4. States that the conditions for transparent, inclusive and credible elections were not met and that the people of Bangladesh were not given the opportunity to express fully their democratic choice;
5. Calls on all political parties to engage in an immediate and genuine dialogue in order to find a way to hold new free, fair, transparent and peaceful elections reflecting the will of the Bangladeshi people as soon as possible;
6. Urges all political leaders in the country to de-escalate political tensions and to strictly call on their supporters not to participate in any acts of violence;
7. Calls on the Government to instruct its security forces to strictly observe their obligation to use maximum restraint and avoid lethal force and to thoroughly investigate the deaths of all those killed;
8. Calls on all political parties and actors concerned to respect the rule of law,
9. Is generally concerned about the human rights situation in Bangladesh and reminds the government to refrain from purely political motivated arrests; recalls in this respect the obligation of the Government of Bangladesh to respect its international commitments in the field of human rights;

10. Calls on the European External Action Service to monitor closely the human rights and political situation in Bangladesh;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission, the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, 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.