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Plenary sitting

<NoDocSe>B9‑0195/2021</NoDocSe>

<Date>{09/03/2021}9.3.2021</Date>

<TitreType>MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION</TitreType>

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

<TitreRecueil>pursuant to Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure</TitreRecueil>

<Titre>on the human rights situation in Bahrain, in particular the cases of death row inmates and human rights defenders</Titre>

<DocRef>(2021/2578(RSP))</DocRef>

<RepeatBlock-By><Depute>Ryszard Antoni Legutko, Raffaele Fitto, Anna Fotyga, Karol Karski, Witold Jan Waszczykowski, Elżbieta Kruk, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Assita Kanko, Veronika Vrecionová, Angel Dzhambazki, Adam Bielan, Bogdan Rzońca, Joanna Kopcińska, Elżbieta Rafalska, Valdemar Tomaševski</Depute>

<Commission>{ECR}on behalf of the ECR Group</Commission>

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B9‑0195/2021

European Parliament resolution on the human rights situation in Bahrain, in particular the cases of death row inmates and human rights defenders

(2021/2578(RSP))

*The European Parliament*,

– having regard to its previous resolutions on the Kingdom of Bahrain,

– having regard to the Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) of 1988,

– having regard to the signing of the EU-Bahrain Cooperation Arrangement of 10 February 2021,

– having regard to the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders, on human rights dialogues with third countries, and on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline,

– having regard to the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),

– having regard to the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment of Punishment,

– having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

– having regard to the Arab Charter on Human Rights, ratified by Bahrain in 2013,

– having regard to Bahrain’s Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners, adopted and declared by the General Assembly Resolution of 14 December 1990,

– having regard to the Seventh Annual Report of 2019-2020 by Bahrain’s Ombudsman at the Ministry of Interior;

– having regard to the report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) of 23 November 2011 with its final revision of 10 December 2011,

– having regard to Rules 144 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas courts have upheld death sentences against several opposition activists, including of Mohammed Ramadan and Hussain Moosa despite credible evidence that both men were convicted on the basis of confessions obtained under torture, and Ali Salman, leader of the disbanded opposition party Al-Wefaq, for allegedly spying for Qatar;

B. whereas among prisoners currently incarcerated are high-profile political opposition leaders, activists, bloggers and human rights defenders sentenced to life imprisonment for their roles in the 2011 pro-democracy protests;

C. whereas Bahrain’s prisons remain overcrowded and unsanitary, which is particularly dangerous during the Covid-19 pandemic; whereas numerous political prisoners have gone on strike to protest poor treatment in custody, including alleged denial of medical care and religious discrimination against Shi’ite prisoners;

D. whereas according to reports, Bahraini authorities increased repression against online and social media activity and prosecuted critics for peaceful expression; whereas reports state that the Covid-19 pandemic was used as a pretext to further limit the freedom of expression in the Kingdom;

E. whereas Bahraini human rights defenders and their family members have faced harassment, intimidation and prosecution; whereas some have gone into exile and many have been arbitrarily stripped of citizenship;

F. whereas the EU consistently engages with the Bahraini authorities on human rights concerns in the Kingdom and the 5th meeting of the bilateral Human Rights Working Group meeting was held in February 2021; whereas Bahrain is the second country in the Gulf region with whom the EU has established a Human Rights Dialogue;

G. whereas Bahrain is a key ally of the European Union in the Arabian Gulf, including in areas of political and economic relations, energy and security; whereas the stability of the Arabian Gulf region is of strategic interest to NATO and there is mutual interest in further deepening the partnership so as to better respond to future security challenges;

H. whereas the Kingdom of Bahrain has a rich history of longstanding openness to other cultures around the world and is an active player in seeking to create momentum in de-escalating, building confidence and fostering dialogue in the Gulf and wider Middle East region;

1. Urges the Bahraini authorities to ensure that all trials comply with international law on fair trial and due process and that the rights of detainees are upheld, including Bahrain’s basic principles for the treatment of prisoners; urges the Bahraini authorities to halt executions of prisoners and to commute their sentences;

2. Expresses grave concern about reports of alleged torture and ill-treatment of detainees and renews its call on the Bahraini authorities to refrain from all torture, cruel and degrading treatment of detainees, to investigate cases of torture and to bring perpetrators to justice;

3. Calls for the release of all those detained solely for their peaceful political and human rights activities; calls for an end to all acts of violence, harassment, intimidation and censorship of human rights defenders, political opponents, civil society actors and their relatives within and outside the country by state authorities, security forces and services;

4. Underlines that the admission of evidence obtained under torture in any proceeding violates the rights to due process and fair trial and is prohibited without exception;

5. Calls on the Bahraini authorities to guarantee a safe space for civil society organisations, independent media and to censure the right to freedom of expression;

6. Continues to support the Government of Bahrain’s reform agenda and encourages the Kingdom to aim for stability through further reforms and inclusive reconciliation in an environment where peaceful political grievances can be expressed freely, in line with the Kingdom’s international obligations;

7. Supports and welcomes the work of the Ministry of Interior Ombudsman, the National Institute for Human Rights, the Detainees’ Rights Commission and the Special Investigation Unit within the Ministry of Justice;

8. Supports further dialogue, engagement and the sharing of best practices in regards to human rights and judicial procedures between the EU, its Member States and the Kingdom of Bahrain; welcomes the EU-Bahrain Cooperation Arrangement;

9. Welcomes the Government’s commitments to continue to improve the rights and opportunities available to all Bahrainis; supports the Kingdom’s commitment to ensuring an inclusive and pluralistic society;

10. Attaches great importance to Bahrain’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and stresses the importance of non-interference in Bahrain’s internal affairs by forces seeking to subvert the stability and security of the Kingdom;

11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the government and parliament of the Kingdom of Bahrain.