



Plenary sitting

B9-0570/2022

13.12.2022

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 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on the case of human rights defender Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja in Bahrain
(2022/2994(RSP))

Angel Dzhambazki, Karol Karski, Witold Jan Waszczykowski, Alexandr Vondra, Andżelika Anna Możdżanowska, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Joachim Stanisław Brudziński, Veronika Vrecionová, Valdemar Tomaševski, Anna Zalewska, Elżbieta Kruk
on behalf of the ECR Group

**European Parliament resolution on the case of human rights defender Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja in Bahrain
(2022/2994(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 or 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 Eighth Annual Report of 2020-2021 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 Danish –Bahraini national Abdulhadi al-Khawaja is the founder and served as the President of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights and worked as a regional coordinator for Front Line Defenders; whereas he was arrested in Bahrain on 9 April 2011 following protests that had erupted in the Kingdom following the uprising in the Arab world, also known as the 'Arab Spring'; whereas on 22 June 2011, a Bahraini court sentenced him to life imprisonment;
- B. whereas allegations against Abdulhadi al-Khawaja include attempting to unlawfully and forcibly overthrow the constitutional order of the Kingdom of Bahrain, communicating with parties working in the service of a foreign country with the intention of committing hostile actions against the Kingdom of Bahrain, financing and participating in terrorism,

and inciting hatred; whereas Abdulhadi al-Khawaja's family deny the charges against him to be true and state that he has not had the opportunity to defend himself against the charges nor has been able to access information to understand what the charges contain; whereas the Kingdom of Bahrain states that Abdulhadi al-Khawaja received all legal and procedural guarantees of due process at all stages;

- C. whereas among other prisoners currently incarcerated in Bahrain include high-profile political opposition leaders, activists, bloggers and human rights defenders sentenced to life imprisonment for their roles in the 2011 pro-democracy protests;
 - 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 6th Human Rights Dialogue was held 27 October 2022; whereas the human rights dialogue covers a broad range of topics, such as freedom of expression and association, rule of law, including the right to a fair trial and the death penalty, women's rights and gender equality, labour rights and freedom of religion or belief; whereas the EU commended the ongoing efforts of Bahrain in promoting interfaith dialogue and welcomed the adoption of the National Human Rights Action Plan 2022-2026;
 - G. whereas Bahrain is an important 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 that of Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, and that Bahrain's basic principles for the treatment of prisoners are fully implemented; underlines that the rights of prisoners need to be ensured at all times, including their ability to receive adequate medical care and full access to their families and lawyers of their own choice;
 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; 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;

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;
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 and supports the ongoing EU-Bahrain Human Rights Dialogue;
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.