



Plenary sitting

B9-0381/2023

12.9.2023

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 human rights situation in Bangladesh, notably the case of Odhikar (2023/2833(RSP))

Katalin Cseh, Petras Auštrevičius, Malik Azmani, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Olivier Chastel, Dita Charanzová, Bernard Guetta, Svenja Hahn, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Karen Melchior, Urmas Paet, Dragoș Pișlaru, Frédérique Ries, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Ramona Strugariu, Dragoș Tudorache, Hilde Vautmans

on behalf of the Renew Group

B9-0381/2023

Motion for a European Parliament resolution on the human rights situation in Bangladesh, notably the case of Odhikar (2023/2833(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Bangladesh, in particular those of 2017 on freedom of expression in Bangladesh and of 2018 on the human rights situation in Bangladesh,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
 - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas since 1994 Odhikar has been a leading human rights organisations in Bangladesh which has been documenting and reporting on human rights abuses for over 20 years;
- B. whereas in 2013 Odhikar’s Secretary Adilur Rahman Khan and its Director ASM Nasiruddin Elan were arbitrarily detained, after the organisation published a fact-finding report on extrajudicial killings and excessive use of force to disperse a protest in Bangladesh; whereas Odhikar and other human right defenders associated with them have been the target of harassment and intimidation by the Bangladesh government;
- C. whereas after ten years Odhikar’s leaders continue to face judicial harassment at the Cyber Tribunal of Dhaka for or allegedly publishing “fake, distorted and defamatory” information;
- D. whereas Bangladesh is under “enhanced engagement” with the EU under the Everything but Arms (EBA) scheme;
1. Condemns the harassment, intimidation and violation of fundamental rights committed by the government of Bangladesh; Strongly calls upon the Bangladeshi government to immediately cease any acts of retaliation against Odhikar and other human right defenders and engage in a dialogue to create an enabling environment for the promotion of human rights;
 2. Raises profound concerns over the recent events regarding the Cyber Tribunal of Dhaka legal proceedings against Odhikar’s leaders that has been marred by multiple violations of due process; Calls on the Bangladeshi authorities to ensure the respect for due process and the right of fair trial in line with international standards;
 3. Shares the view that Odhikar’s case reflects the “ongoing harassment and targeting of human rights defenders and organisations” in Bangladesh, in clear violation of the right to freedom of association as guaranteed under Article 22 of the ICCPR;

4. Expresses deep concern regarding the escalating repression against human rights defenders in Bangladesh, occurring in conjunction with the recent reported surge in mass arrests of opposition members and the excessive use of force against protesters in the run-up to the January 2024 elections;
5. Reminds that Bangladesh's arrangements under the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) are dependent on significant improvements on the situation of human rights in the country; is of the opinion that if serious and systematic violations of human rights principles persist that questions the country's eligibility for future application to the GSP+ scheme;
6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the United Nations and the Government and Parliament of Bangladesh.