



Plenary sitting

B9-0382/2023

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))

Pedro Marques, Karsten Lucke, Carina Ohlsson
on behalf of the S&D Group

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,
 - having regard to the ICCPR, notably Article 22,
 - having regard to Rules 144(5) and 132(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the human rights situation in Bangladesh continues to deteriorate, with enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings;
- B. whereas civil society organisations face harassment and repression from the government and judiciary in Bangladesh, while defending human rights in the country and participating in UN human rights procedures;
- C. whereas the human rights organisation Odhikar has faced over a decade of harassment and criminalisation, including its deregistration as an NGO in Bangladesh; whereas it is also the subject of a defamation campaign in the media;
- D. whereas members of Odhikar and their family members have reported numerous cases of surveillance and intimidation by state officials; whereas in 2013 Odhikar Secretary Adilur Rahman Khan and Director ASM Nasiruddin Elan were arbitrarily detained by police for several weeks; whereas they continue to face judicial harassment and are currently being prosecuted on trumped-up allegations;
- E. whereas the case has faced widespread condemnation for failing to follow due process; whereas in April 2023 several international observers were expelled from the court; whereas Khan and Elan face a possible sentencing of up to ten years imprisonment;
1. Deplores the continued targeting of human rights organisations, notably Odhikar; insists that the Bangladesh authorities immediately cease the persecution of NGOs, and uphold the country's commitments to protect fundamental freedoms including freedom of association;
 2. Calls on the Bangladesh authorities to withdraw the charges against Odhikar and its staff, and ensure the organisation can reinstate its registration and resume work unhindered;
 3. Underlines the importance of respecting due process, and urges government and judicial authorities to respect international standards and cooperate with UN bodies to ensure these standards are met; insists that international observers are permitted to attend court hearings;

4. Urges authorities in Bangladesh to cooperate with human rights organisations, in order to collectively bring an end to human rights abuses in the country, including enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings;
5. Is concerned at the potential chilling effect that the harassment of Odhikar could have on the wider work of civil society; calls on the EEAS and Delegation in Dhaka to intensify EU support for human rights defenders and NGOs in Bangladesh;
6. Recalls that Bangladesh is under enhanced engagement with the EU through the Everything But Arms trade arrangement; notes that the use of this procedure is due to the seriousness of the ongoing violations of international conventions in Bangladesh; urges the Commission to intensify scrutiny of human rights trends in the country, with a view to assessing GSP compliance;
7. Instruct its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, and the Government and Parliament of Bangladesh.