



Plenary sitting

B9-0383/2023

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

Ivan Štefanec, Tomáš Zdechovský, David Lega, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Janina Ochojska, Vladimír Bilčík, Andrey Kovatchev, Vangelis Meimarakis, Michaela Šojdrová, Eugen Tomac, Jiří Pospíšil, Peter Pollák
on behalf of the PPE Group

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

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Bangladesh,
 - having regard to the 5 September Statement by the Spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights,
 - having regard to the UN experts statement from 11 July 2023 regarding Bangladesh acts of harassment against representatives of the human rights organisation Odhikar,
 - having regard to Rules 144(5) and 132(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas according to numerous sources, included the UN, the human rights situation in Bangladesh has been severely deteriorating over the past years, including systematic attacks on opposition representatives and NGOs;
- B. whereas at least two opposition activists died and hundreds were injured in clashes across Bangladesh this summer as tens of thousands took to the streets demanding the Prime Minister's resignation and the appointment of a neutral caretaker administration to oversee the upcoming January national elections;
- C. whereas Bangladeshi police fired rubber bullets, tear gas, and water cannons, and beat opposition party supporters during protests in July 2023; whereas during these protests the authorities arrested over 800 leaders and activists of the main opposition party;
- D. whereas the Human Rights organisation Odhikar had tried to renew its registration since 2014 and whereas Adilur Rahman Khan and Nasiruddin Elan, two leaders of Odhikar, have for over 10 years been faced with various legal cases against them;
- E. whereas according to various NGOs the freedom of expression, including the freedom of the media, have been undermined by the enactment of the Digital Security Act (DSA) in 2018;
- F. whereas Bangladesh benefits from the Enhanced Engagement Process of the Everything But Arms (EBA) trade preferences under the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP);
1. Expresses its deep concern about the deteriorating state of democracy and freedom of speech in Bangladesh, and demands that the government urgently ends the use of excessive force against protesters and stops arbitrary arrests of protesters;

2. Calls on the Bangladeshi authorities to ensure fair and just elections in early 2024 with equal conditions for all candidates; encourages all parties to participate in the elections and calls upon all sides to refrain from using violence;
3. Calls to immediately rescind the decision to arbitrarily deregister the NGO Odhikar and persecution of its officials and allow the human rights group to function without fear of reprisals;
4. Welcomes Bangladesh's election to the UN Human Rights Council and calls upon it to live-up to the obligations and reputational responsibilities that come along with this membership;
5. Demands the government to respond to the allegations of human rights violations through credible independent investigations and refrain from punishing human rights defenders and civil society organizations.
6. Condemns violence against ethnic and religious minorities, including Christians;
7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and the government of Bangladesh.